# CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME IX

## MADRAS

PART VI
VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPHS
14. VISAVANOOR

P. K. NAMBIAR
OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE
SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, MADRAS

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**( Census Report—Vol. No. IX will relate to Madras only. Under this series will be issued the following publications. )**

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| Part | XII | ... | Languages of Madras State |

* *Already published*

# FOREWORD

Apart from laying the foundations of demography in this sub-continent, a hundred years of the Indian Census has also produced "elaborate and scholarly accounts of the variegated phenomena of Indian life—sometimes with no statistics attached, but usually with just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to their conclusions". In a country, largely illiterate, where statistical or numerical comprehension of even such a simple thing as age was liable to be inaccurate, an understanding of the social structure was essential. It was more necessary to attain a broad understanding of what was happening around oneself than to wrap oneself up in 'statistical ingenuity' or 'mathematical manipulation'. This explains why the Indian Census came to be interested in 'many by-paths' and nearly every branch of scholarship, from anthropology and sociology to geography and religion'.

In the last few decades, the Census has increasingly turned its efforts to the presentation of village statistics. This suits the temper of the times as well as our political and economic structure. For even as we have a great deal of centralization on the one hand and decentralization on the other, my colleagues thought it would be a welcome continuation of the Census tradition to try to invest the dry bones of village statistics with flesh-and-blood accounts of social structure and social change. It was accordingly decided to select a few villages in every State for special study, where personal observation would be brought to bear on the interpretation of statistics to find out how much of a village was static and yet changing and how fast the winds of change were blowing and from where.

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole State in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly purposive; the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast to those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type-studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

A brief account of the tests of selection will help to explain. A minimum of thirty-five villages was to be chosen with great care to represent adequately geographical, occupational and even ethnic diversity. Of this minimum of thirty-five, the distribution was to be as follows:

(a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e. g., fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry-workers etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500-700 persons or more. The village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of modern communication, such as the district administrative headquarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus, there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

It is a unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference, as my colleagues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield ; and although it accounts to some extent for a certain unevenness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extra-mural rigours of the task. For, the Survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals, of small and rural industry and others, was an 'extra', over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

It might be of interest to recount briefly the stages by which the Survey enlarged its scope. At the first Census Conference in September 1959, the Survey set itself the task of what might be called a record *in situ* of material traits, like settlement patterns of the village ; house types ; diet ; dress ; ornaments and footwear ; furniture and storing vessels ; common means of transport of goods and passengers ; domestication of animals and birds ; markets attended ; worship of deities ; festivals and fairs. There were to be recordings, of course, of cultural and social traits and occupational mobility. This was followed up in March, 1960 by two specimen schedules, one for each household, the other for the village as a whole, which, apart from spelling out the mode of inquiry suggested in September, 1959 conference, introduced groups of questions aimed at sensing changes in attitude and behaviour in such fields as marriage, inheritance, movable and immovable property, industry, indebtedness, education, community life and collective activity, social disabilities, forums of appeal over disputes, village leadership and organisation of cultural life. It was now plainly the intention to provide adequate statistical support to empirical 'feel', to approach qualitative change through statistical quantities. It had been difficult to give thought to the importance of 'just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to conclusion', at a time when my colleagues were straining themselves to the utmost for the success of the main Census operations, but once the Census count itself was left behind in March, 1961, a series of three regional seminars in Trivandrum [May 1961], Darjeeling and Srinagar [June 1961], restored their attention to this field and the importance of tracing social change through a number of well-devised statistical tables was once again recognised. This itself presupposed a fresh survey of villages already done ; but it was worth the trouble in view of the possibilities that a close analysis of statistics offered and also because the 'Consanguinity' Schedule remained to be canvassed. By November 1961, however, more was expected of these surveys than ever before. There was dissatisfaction on the one hand with too many general statements and a growing desire on the other to draw conclusions from statistics, to regard social and economic data as inter-related processes, and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion through land-reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study camp was organised in the last week of December, 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together. The Social Studies Section of the Census Commission rendered assistance to State Superintendents by way of scrutiny and technical comment on the frame of Survey and presentation of results.

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the Survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had originally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for in quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a Survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love. It has succeeded in attaining what it set out to achieve : to construct a map of village India's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this Survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to 'the most fruitful single source of information about the country'. Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceded that the Survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules finally adopted for this monograph have been printed in an appendix.

*New Delhi,*
*July 30, 1964.*

ASOK MITRA,
*Registrar General, India.*

# PREFACE

An interesting feature of 1961 Census is the preparation of Monographs on selected villages. Sri A. Mitra, Registrar General, India, has, in his foreword, given the reader a general background of these village surveys.

Madras has chosen 40 villages. This is the fourteenth report of the series. It relates to VISAVANOOR village in Paramakudi taluk of Ramanathapuram district. The village is situated in dry and famine-stricken tracts of East Ramanathapuram. It is a backward village with dry cultivation which is quite uneconomic. The absence of proper means of communications is a serious handicap to the material development of the villagers. The village society is multi-ethnic in composition. Besides Muslims and Christians, there are Hindus of several castes including Scheduled Castes. Despite the divisions and distinctions, there exists social harmony and unity among the different communities. Their life will be of interest to the reader.

The survey was conducted by Sri S. Dhanasekaran, Tabulation Officer who collected the data and prepared the report, which after editing has been presented to the reader.

*Madras,*
*February 11, 1965*

**P. K. NAMBIAR,**
*Superintendent of Census Operations*

# LIST OF VILLAGES SELECTED FOR THE SURVEY

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Ayyangarkulam* | ... | Chingleput District |
| 2. | Sunnambukulam | ... | ,, |
| 3. | Lakkinayakkanpatti | ... | South Arcot District |
| 4. | Thadagam* | ... | ,, |
| 5. | Arkavadi | ... | ,, |
| 6. | Hasanamapettai | ... | North Arcot District |
| 7. | Paravakkal | ... | ,, |
| 8. | Arkasanahalli* | ... | Salem District |
| 9. | Kanakagiri* | ... | ,, |
| 10. | Pappanaickenpatti | ... | ,, |
| 11. | Aladipatti | ... | ,, |
| 12. | Iswaramoorthipalayam | ... | ,, |
| 13. | Kumbalam | ... | ,, |
| 14. | Nellithurai | ... | Coimbatore District |
| 15. | Hallimoyar | ... | Nilgiris District |
| 16. | Kinnakorai | ... | ,, |
| 17. | Vilpatti * | ... | Madurai District |
| 18. | Sirumalai | ... | ,, |
| 19. | Periyur | ... | ,, |
| 20. | Thiruvalavayanallur | ... | ,, |
| 21. | Thenbaranadu * | ... | Tiruchirapalli District |
| 22. | Thiruvellarai * | ... | ,, |
| 23. | Ariyur | ... | ,, |
| 24. | Kadambangudi | ... | Thanjavur District |
| 25. | Vilangulam | ... | ,, |
| 26. | Kunnalur * | ... | ,, |
| 27. | Kodiakkarai | ... | ,, |
| 28. | Golwarpatti | ... | Ramanathapuram District |
| 29. | Visavanoor** | ... | ,, |
| 30. | Athangarai * | ... | ,, |
| 31. | Ravanasamudram* | ... | Tirunelveli District |
| 32. | Pudukulam * | ... | ,, |
| 33. | Alwarkarkulam | ... | ,, |
| 34. | Kilakottai | ... | ,, |
| 35. | Odaimarichan | ... | ,, |
| 36. | Kuvalaikanni | ... | ,, |
| 37. | Koottumangalam * | ... | Kanyakumari District |
| 38. | Kadathuchery | ... | ,, |
| 39. | Kottuthalazhamkulam | ... | ,, |
| 40. | Kadukkara* | ... | ,, |

* *Already published* ** *The present volume (No. 14 of the series)*

# VILLAGE SURVEY REPORT

## ON

# VISAVANOOR

*Field Study and First Report* ... ... S. DHANASEKARAN, M.A.,
*Tabulation Officer*

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTERS | | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | INTRODUCTION | ... | 1 |
| II | PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE | ... | 4 |
| III | POPULATION | ... | 38 |
| IV | VILLAGE ECONOMY | ... | 63 |
| V | SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE | ... | 95 |
| VI | CONCLUSION | ... | 105 |
| **APPENDICES** | | | |
| I | HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE USED FOR THE SURVEY | ... | 107 |
| II | VILLAGE SCHEDULE USED FOR THE SURVEY | ... | 113 |
| III | GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS | ... | 117 |


# ILLUSTRATIONS


| MAPS | | | Facing page No. |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | Map showing the location of Visavanoor | ... | x |
| II | Site plan of the village | ... | 1 |

| PHOTOGRAPHS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Approach to the main village | ... | 2 |
| 2. | A street scene in Kalladithidal | | |
| 3. | The cart-track connecting the village | ... | 3 |
| 4. | The plight of the bullocks dragging along the cart-track | | |
| 5. | A Maravar cultivator family | ... | 6 |
| 6. | A Chettiyar merchant family | | |
| 7. | The village carpenter | ... | 10 |
| 8. | The village barber | | |
| 9. | The Adi-dravidas | ... | 11 |
| 10. | Catholic Parayans of Kalladithidal | | |
| 11. | Pallar women workers | ... | 12 |
| 12. | Shanars, the palmyra tappers | ... | 13 |
| 13. | A poor Kuravan family | ... | 14 |
| 14. | Rowthers in the main hamlet | | |
| 15. | A Muslim family | ... | 15 |
| 16. | The Catholic Udayars | | |
| 17. | Problem of drinking water | ... | 22 |
| 18. | Source of water supply | | |
| 19. | The Muslim street | ... | 23 |
| 20. | The settlement of Shanars | | |

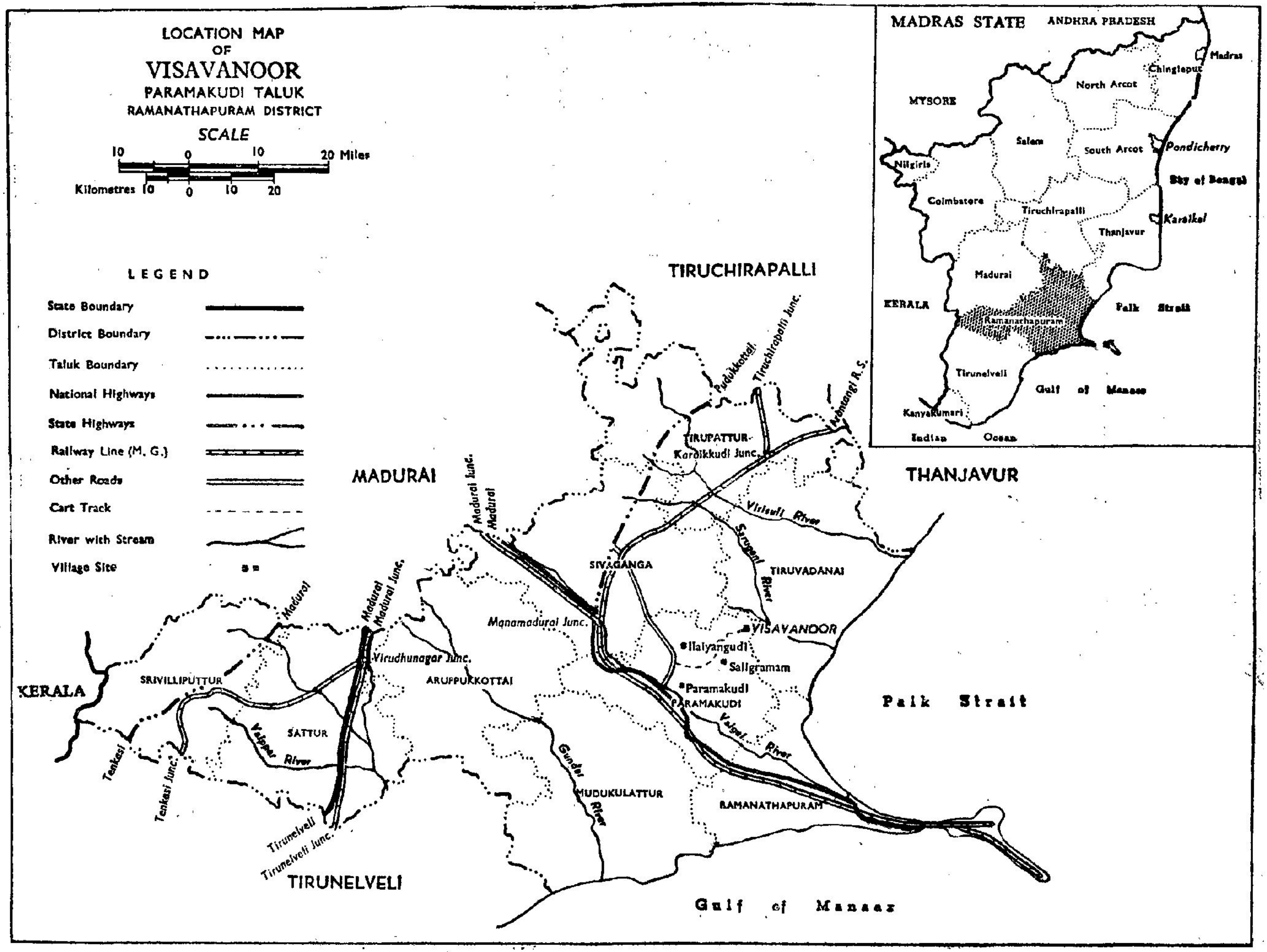
21. A thatched hut of a Pallar household ... 26
22. A girl wearing sithadai or a small saree ... 27
23—25. Ornaments ... 30—32
26. Household utensils ... 33
27. The village school } ... 60
28. Catholic Missionary
29. Play-ground for the school boys } ... 61
30. Muslim boys and girls studying Koran
31. Transplantation of paddy } ... 78
32. The farmer's wife assisting in transplantation
33—36. Agricultural operations ... 79, 82&83
37—39. Mosque and prayers ... 96 &97
40&41. The churches at Kalladithidal ... 98 &99
42&43. Hindu temples ... 102
44. A patient getting treatment from a witch doctor } ... 103
45. A Catholic Udayar joint family

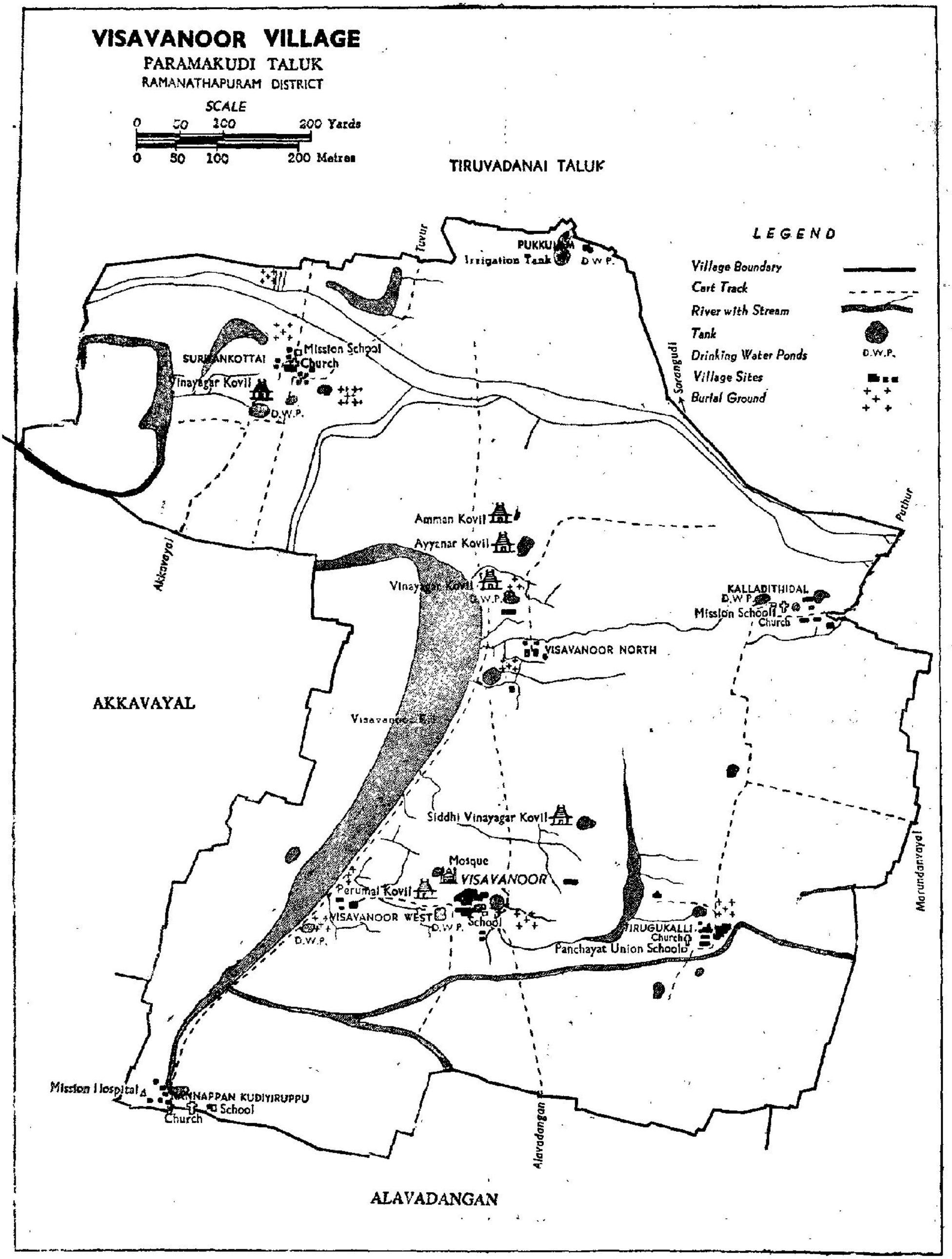
**SKETCHES** On page No.

1. Carpenter's Tools ... 11
2. A tiled house of an Udayar } ... 23—25
3 & 4. Ground plans
5. A mud-walled thatched hut ... 25
6—14. Ornaments ... 29—31
15—17. Utensils ... 36
18. Kerosene lamp } ... 37
19. Slicer in the kitchen
20. Tools for tapping palmyra ... 74
21—26. Agricultural implements ... 78—80

**CHARTS**

1. Ethnic Structure Facing page No. 7
2. Distribution of population by age groups ... 43
3. Age pyramid ... 44
4. Age at marriage ... 52
5. Age and literacy ... 56
6. Literacy and educational status ... 58
7. Occupational pattern ... 66
8. Caste and occupational pattern ... 70
9. Ownership of land Facing page No. 72
10. Average size of holding Facing page No. 76
11. Monthly income ... 84
12. Indebtedness by income groups ... 90
13. Causes of debt ... 92


LOCATION MAP
OF
VISAVANOOR
PARAMAKUDI TALUK
RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT
SCALE
10 0 10 20 Miles
Kilometres 10 0 10 20
LEGEND
State Boundary
District Boundary
Taluk Boundary
National Highways
State Highways
Railway Line (M. G.)
Other Roads
Cart Track
River with Stream
Village Site
MADRAS STATE
ANDHRA PRADESH
Madras
Chingleput
North Arcot
MYSORE
Salem
South Arcot
Pondicherry
Nilgiris
Bay of Bengal
Coimbatore
Tiruchirapalli
Karaikal
Thanjavur
Madurai
KERALA
Ramanathapuram
Palk Strait
Tirunelveli
Gulf of Manaar
Kanyakumari
Indian Ocean
TIRUCHIRAPALLI
Pudukkottai
Tiruchirapalli Junc.
Arantangi R. S.
TIRUPATTUR
Karaikkudi Junc.
MADURAI
THANJAVUR
Madurai Junc.
Madurai
Virisuli River
Sarugani River
SIVAGANGA
TIRUVADANAI
Manamadurai Junc.
VISAVANOOR
Ilaiyangudi
Sallgramam
Paramakudi
PARAMAKUDI
Virudhunagar Junc.
ARUPPUKKOTTAI
SRIVILLIPUTTUR
KERALA
SATTUR
Vaippar River
Vaigai River
Palk Strait
Tenkasi
Tenkasi Junc.
Gundar River
MUDUKULATTUR
RAMANATHAPURAM
Tirunelveli
Tirunelveli Junc.
TIRUNELVELI
Gulf of Manaar


VISAVANOOR VILLAGE
PARAMAKUDI TALUK
RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT
SCALE
0 50 100 200 Yards
0 50 100 200 Metres
TIRUVADANAI TALUK
LEGEND
Village Boundary
Cart Track
River with Stream
Tank
Drinking Water Ponds
D.W.P.
Village Sites
Burial Ground
Irrigation Tank
D.W.P.
Tuvur
Mission School
Church
Vinayagar Kovil
D.W.P.
Sorangudi
Puthur
Akkavayal
Amman Kovil
Ayyanar Kovil
Vinayagar Kovil
D.W.P.
KALLADITHIDAL
D.W.P.
Mission School
Church
VISAVANOOR NORTH
AKKAVAYAL
Siddhi Vinayagar Kovil
Mosque
VISAVANOOR
Perumal Kovil
VISAVANOOR WEST
D.W.P.
School
D.W.P.
Church
Panchayat Union School
Marundanvayal
Mission Hospital
Church
School
Alavadangan
ALAVADANGAN

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Ramanathapuram district

RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT is known as the backward district of Madras State; it is mostly dry and barren, characterised by scanty rainfall and frequent droughts. In particular, East Ramanathapuram region comprising Tirupattur, Paramakudi, Tiruvadanai, Mudukulathur and Ramanathapuram taluks is more backward than other taluks as far as communications, irrigation facilities, public health and medical aid are concerned. On the border of Paramakudi–Tiruvadanai taulks, lies a typical backward village known as Visavanoor. It is a remote village of old and settled character far removed from any modern means of communications. Unconnected by any road or by a regular cart track, Visavanoor looks rather an isolated island amidst the vast expanse of dry and barren tracts in the northern part of Paramakudi taluk.

### The Village

2. The very first impression one would get from the village is the human's poverty at its worst, and his struggle for existence. Lack of assured water supply, complete absence of fertile soil, frequent droughts and such factors lead to a very poor yield of paddy or other crops and peasants toil for a bare subsistence farming. It is no wonder that a large number of families of landless coolies move every year to Thanjavur delta in search of work and food. A visit to Visavanoor will convince any one why Ramanathapuram is known as ' depressed ' district of the State; the terrain of the country is barren, more or less, destitute of vegetation. Plain succeeds plain with unvarying monotony and one can see few useful trees except the long rows of tall palmyra trees.

### Topography

3. In the north-eastern part of Paramakudi taluk, the village of Visavanoor lies just close to the border of Paramakudi and Tiruvadanai taluks; Pukkulam, the northern-most hamlet of Visavanoor is exactly on the border. Visavanoor is situated about nine miles north east of the small town of Salaigramam, which is the firka headquarters. Ilayangudi, an industrial town about 15 miles south west of Visavanoor is the Panchayat Union headquarters and Ilayangudi Panchayat Union began functioning from the 2nd October 1961, under the decentralised scheme of Panchayat Raj. Paramakudi, the taluk headquarters is 22 miles away, which is also the nearest market town. The headquarters of Revenue Division is at Ramanathapuram at a distance of 44 miles, where several District Offices are located. The district headquarters for Ramanathapuram district is Madurai City which is the headquarter's town of the adjacent district of Madurai, where the Collector's Office, District Magistrate's Office etc., are functioning. In Rajasingamangalam, a nearby village in Tiruvadanai taluk, the police station is located; though it is situated in a different taluk, the police station at Rajasingamangalam is in charge of maintaining law and order, perhaps due to its proximity. The Sub-Registrar's Office for Visavanoor is at Tiruvadanai, the headquarters of Tiruvadanai taluk and the villagers go all the way to that town for matters connected with registration of documents etc. The very fact that Visavanoor lies on the border of the two taluks seems to be the cause for such dispersal of various Government Offices in different places and certainly much hardship and inconvenience is experienced by the villagers.

### Hamlets

4. Visavanoor occupies a large area of 7.72 square miles; the village site is not a continuous one being broken at some places by irrigation tanks. The village is not a compact residential unit but on the other hand, is a large collection of eight hamlets, dispersed widely on all sides from the main hamlet Visavanoor. It stretches towards the north to the hamlet of Pukkulam, lying four miles off from Kannappan Kudiyiruppu, the southern-most hamlet. From west to east, it is about three to four miles across, the hamlet of Suriyankottai lies on the west end and Thirugukalli is on the east. To move from one hamlet to another in rainy season is itself a difficult task.

**Climate**

5. Visavanoor has got a dry and hot climate, characterised by scanty rainfall. Rainfall is maximum during the north east monsoon i.e., from October to December. November is the month of optimum rainfall, while in May and June, there is practically no rain. The south west monsoon contributes little rain and variation in rainfall is found to be great. There is no rain gauge station in Visavanoor or in the close vicinity. The nearest rainfall recording station viz., Paramakudi has got an average annual rainfall of 30.19 inches or 766.8 millimetres.

**Terrain**

6. Visavanoor has black soil with high content of salinity. The soil is much impoverished and as years go by, it is fastly becoming more and more impoverished, as no effective measures are taken to enrich the soil, resulting in low yield of crops. In regard to flora of the village, as already said, Visavanoor is devoid of any useful or fruit-bearing trees. The terrain is so barren but for the palmyra groves found here and there and some shrubs and thorny plants along the cart-tracks and footpaths.

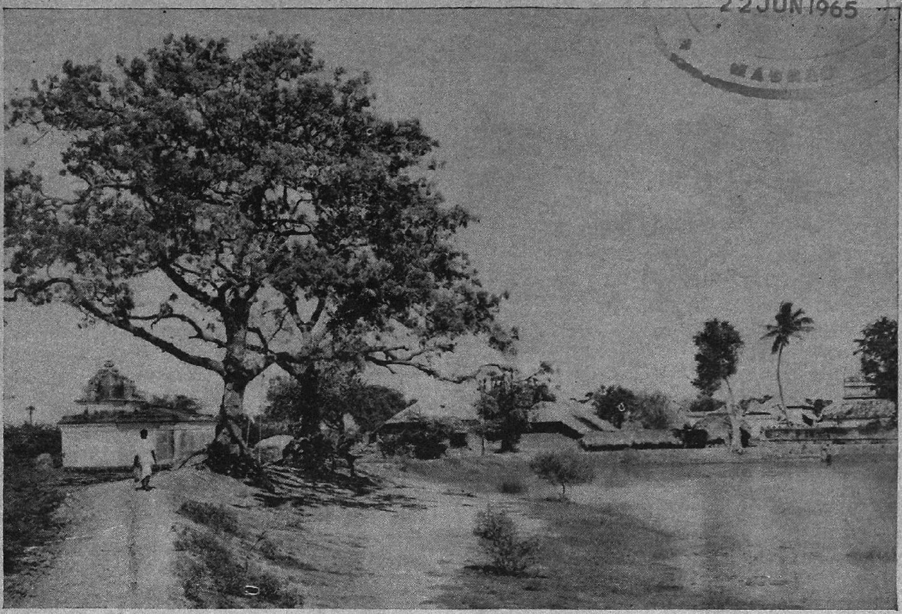
**Transport and communications**

7. The backwardness of Visavanoor may be attributed chiefly to the lack of any means of communications. It is a remote village, neither connected by rail nor by road; not even a good cart-track connects the village to the pucca road nearby, which passes through Ilayangudi, 15 miles away. Salaigramam is the nearest place connected by bus; the cart-track between Visavanoor and Ilayangudi or Salaigramam is not motorable. Jeeps can ply on these paths but with much difficulty. During summer season, Visavanoor is accessible by jeep or bullock-cart through the cart-track passing through Ilayangudi, Sathani, Kalangathankottai and Suranam but in rainy months, the track cannot be used since it is intersected by rain streams or breaches in irrigation tanks caused by flow of water. The plight of the bullocks dragging along the flooded cart-tracks in the rainy season can well be imagined rather than described. The cart-tracks are not laid properly and due to the rains, they become swampy and the sharp edges of cart wheels have churned the soil into innumerable pot-holes; not even jeep can ply its way safely. In the year 1961, the monsoon showers were somewhat heavy and the cart-tracks were completely flooded due to breaches in tanks all around and the village was almost isolated and shut off from the outside world. The isolation, of course, leaves a deep stamp of resignation on the life of the people. The Manamadurai-Dhanuskodi line of Southern Railway passing through Manamadurai, Paramakudi, Ramanathapuram, Rameswaram etc., is the nearest railway and the nearest railway station is Paramakudi, 22 miles far off. The Madurai-Dhanuskodi road, the nearest National Highway also passes through Paramakudi. To reach Visavanoor, one can travel by bus from Paramakudi to Ilayangudi or Salaigramam and then he has to walk or take a bullock-cart on the irregular cart-tracks. Rajasingamangalam is also served by bus traffic and one has to cross the huge irrigation tank of Rajasingamangalam to reach the place from Visavanoor. The common mode of conveyance of the villagers is the bullock-cart and even bicycles are not generally used.

8. The village is served by a Post Office opened in 1961, which was only an experimental branch Post Office at the time of our survey. It was manned by a Muslim merchant in the main hamlet, as a part time work. Letters are delivered daily and there is one despatch everyday. Telegraph facilities are not available here and the villagers go all the way to Ilayangudi to send telegrams. In regard to other means of modern communications such as radio, newspapers etc., the part played by them is limited. The village is not electrified and no public radio is put up by the village panchayat. Two rich families possess radio and dissemination of news on events of outside world is quite limited. Reading of newspapers also has not made any headway among the villagers. During the time of our survey, it was found that reading of newspapers was the habit in 13 households. Library and public reading room are things unknown in this remote village !

**Burial grounds**

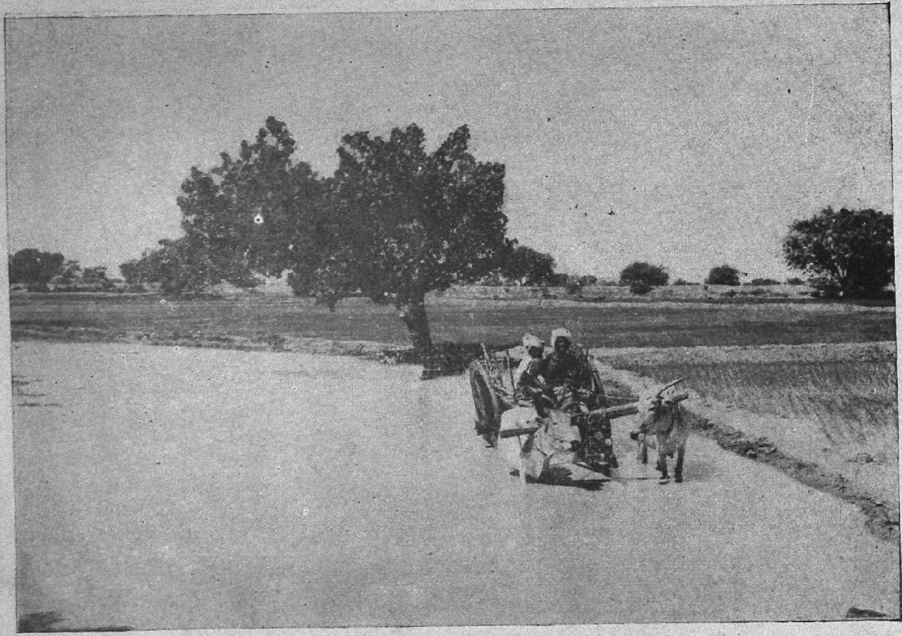
9. There are separate burial grounds or burning ghats for the different castes and religious groups. In the main hamlet, the burial ground of Muslims is located on the bank of *Oorani*, a bathing tank, a little farther from the residential quarters of Scheduled Castes. Beside this burial ground, Hindu castes such as Maravar, Idayar, Vellala have a common burial ground, while socially inferior castes such as Pallars and Parayars bury their dead in an adjacent site, not very far off. In




Approach to the main village

A street scene in Kalladithidal. The Catholic church is seen at the background.

Not even a good cart-track connects the village to the pucca road nearby.



The plight of the bullocks dragging along the flooded cart-tracks in the rainy season.

the hamlets of North Visavanoor and West Visavanoor, we see such separate burial grounds for upper castes and depressed classes. Shanans, the toddy-tapping caste have their own burial ground. In the hamlets where Christians predominate, there are burial places on the outskirts of the village.

**Places of worship**

10. On entering the main village stands the grand old mosque, the first to catch the eyes of a visitor to this village. The major Hindu shrines are Visvamakaliamman, Ayyanar, Perumal, Siddhi Vinayagar etc., found on the outskirts of the village. Shrines of Kaliamman and Mariamman are found in the street corners and by the road side under Margosa and Peepal trees. There are three Catholic churches one in each of the hamlets Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli where Catholic Christians predominate. The church in Kannappan Kudiyiruppu belongs to Protestant Mission of 'Church of South India', and this is situated near the American Mission Hospital.

**Settlement History**

11. Table No. I shows the number of families migrated to this village during the present generation. Of the 649 households in this village, 15 households have come down to Visavanoor, eight households of them being Christians. Most of the families migrated from different parts of Ramanathapuram district and the neighbouring districts. They are either teachers employed in the Board Schools or hospital staff in Kannappan Kudiyiruppu.

**TABLE No. I**

**Settlement History**

| Community | Total No. of households | No. of households settled in present generation | Places from which the families have migrated | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Village | Taluk | District |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Idayar | 151 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 44 | 1 | Karuthakudi | Paramakudi | Ramanathapuram |
| Parayar | 32 | 1 | Kalayarkovil | Sivagangai | do |
| Vellala | 15 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallan | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 1 | Suddanalli | Tiruvadanai | do |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | 1 | Ramalingapuram | Aruppukottai | do |
| Asari | 10 | 1 | ... | Paramakudi | do |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panickar | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | 1 | Seithur | Srivilliputhur | do |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 55 | 1 | Vandal | Paramakudi | do |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 3 | Kothaikudu | Pudukottai | Tiruchirapalli |
| | | | Ammapatti | Dindigul | Madurai |
| | | | Pambur | Paramakudi | Ramanathapuram |
| Protestants | 37 | 5 | | Sattur | do |
| | | | | Palayamcottai | Tirunelveli |
| | | | | Ambasamudram | do |
| | | | Kallakulam | Paramakudi | Ramanathapuram |
| | | | Aramanaikarai | do | do |
| **Total** | **649** | **15** | | | |

# CHAPTER II

## PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

### Ethnic composition

12. As stated earlier, Visavanoor is of multi-ethnic in character; we come across people of 17 Hindu castes, besides Muslims and Christians. Visavanoor presents a conglomeration of such a large number of communities and it is but natural, that the pattern and mode of life vary from religion to religion and between a caste and another within a religion. Each caste has a culture of its own, which is to some extent different from the culture of others. The chief communities are Idayars (Yadhavas), Maravars, Vellalas (Pillai) Chettiyars, Kammalans (Asari) and Scheduled Castes viz., Parayans, Chakkiliyans and Pallans. Among Christians, Roman Catholics are predominant and families of Protestant Christians are only 37 in number. Rowthers are a major community in the main hamlet and they play a major role in the village affairs. The different communities extant in the village are shown in Table No. II.

TABLE No. II

Ethnic Composition

| Religion | Community | Sub-caste/ Sub-sect | Number of households | Persons | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| HINDU | Idayar | Appachi Idayar | 151 | 708 | 340 | 368 |
| | Maravar | Semmanattu | 44 | 191 | 88 | 103 |
| | Parayar | Thotti | 1 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| | | Athaparayar | 6 | 31 | 13 | 18 |
| | | Visvakara | 25 | 127 | 59 | 68 |
| | Vellala | Veerakudi | 4 | 16 | 8 | 8 |
| | | Karkatha | 10 | 42 | 19 | 23 |
| | | Kummangudi | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | Pallan | Ammapallan | 12 | 54 | 22 | 32 |
| | Chettiyar | Manjaputhu | 11 | 54 | 24 | 30 |
| | | Vaniya | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 |
| | Ambattan | ... | 12 | 66 | 29 | 37 |
| | Vannan | ... | 12 | 40 | 20 | 20 |
| | Asari | Thacha Asari | 6 | 33 | 17 | 16 |
| | | Kolla Asari | 3 | 24 | 15 | 9 |
| | | Visvakarma | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | Chakkiliyar | Murasu | 2 | 20 | 11 | 9 |
| | | Thotti | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| | | Amma | 7 | 32 | 16 | 16 |
| | Agamudiyar | Rajakulam | 7 | 35 | 15 | 20 |
| | Pandaram | Sangathar | 3 | 17 | 10 | 7 |
| | | Andi | 1 | 6 | 4 | 2 |

| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Panicker | | 4 | 12 | 5 | 7 |
| | Brahmin | Iyengar | 1 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| | | Iyer | 1 | 2 | ... | 2 |
| | Nadar | | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... |
| | Valluvar | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| | Veduvar | | 1 | 2 | ... | 2 |
| ISLAM | Muslim | Hanafi | 54 | 244 | 104 | 140 |
| | | Labbai | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| CHRISTIAN | Roman Catholic | Udayar | 97 | 535 | 267 | 268 |
| | | | 81 | 356 | 173 | 183 |
| | | Parayar | 26 | 142 | 71 | 71 |
| | | Nadar | 8 | 65 | 32 | 33 |
| | | Pallan | 6 | 23 | 8 | 15 |
| | | Idayar | 6 | 32 | 16 | 16 |
| | | Vellala | 2 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| | Protestant | | 26 | 92 | 39 | 53 |
| | | Idayar | 5 | 27 | 11 | 16 |
| | | Maravar | 4 | 15 | 6 | 9 |
| | | Vellala | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... |
| | | Total | 649 | 3,091 | 1,469 | 1,622 |

**Unity in diversity**

13. People of different castes live as separate body of groups in the various hamlets far and near; however, as the vast majority of people being engaged in cultivation of soil, all of them are closely dependent upon each other economically and otherwise. Members of different communities are linked up in several ways; the relationships of landlord and tenant, cultivator and agricultural cooly, master and servant, creditor and debtor etc., ignore caste barriers to bind them together. Despite the multifarious divisions and distinctions in caste, we feel that there is a sense of unity among the villagers–an invisible unity among diversity! It may be said that village unity is not visible explicitly in normal days, but some incidents or troubles suddenly and strikingly reveal its existence. For instance, when the village is threatened with an epidemic, drought, or flood, the unity of the village community reveals itself in an unmistakable manner. When the irrigation tank of Visavanoor lying west of the main village was about to overflow due to heavy monsoon rains, the villagers joined together to fight for safety from floods and each and every family sent one man for this joint venture; the village was well guarded, by diverting the waters on a different direction.

**Multi-ethnic character**

14. Structurally, Visavanoor is, undoubtedly much more complex than an average South Indian village; the following table indicates the distribution of people and households by communities and the relative strength of each caste will be clear from these statistics. Among Hindu castes, Idayars the shepherd caste, form the major community and Maravars come next in rank. Roman Catholics are, of course, 37.5 per cent of total population and their households form 34.8 per cent of total households in the village. However, not all Catholics live as a 'Community' in the strict sense of the term and among them we find so many caste divisions and distinctions. There is a tendency to group themselves according to the castes to which they originally belonged. The chief and powerful group among Catholic converts are the Udayars, who are the hard-working

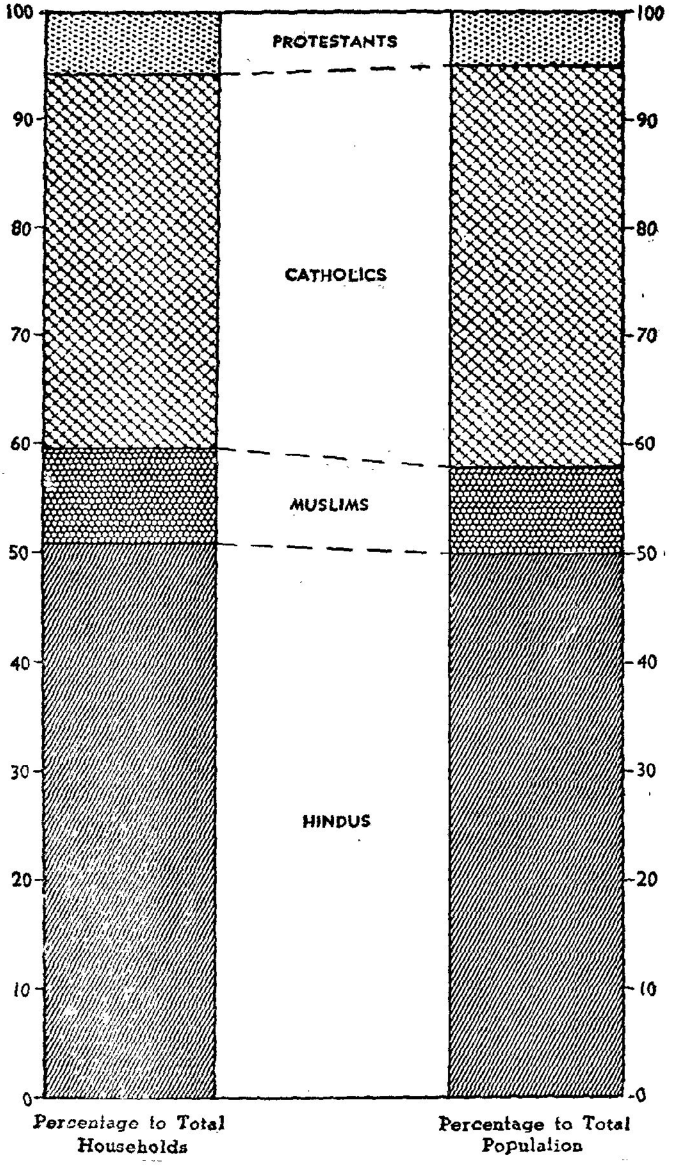
cultivating class predominantly found in the hamlets of Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli. Next to them come Catholic Parayars with 26 households; the other groups consist of Catholic Nadars, converts from the caste of Shanans, Catholic Pallans, Idayars and Vellalas. Hindu Parayars are found large in numbers; roughly 5.4 per cent of population belong to this caste. Muslims almost all of them being Tamil speaking Rowthers of Hanafi sect, are also a major community, living as a solid group in the main hamlet and their proportion in the village population is 8 per cent. We see that households of Protestant Christians are 37 in number forming 5.7 per cent of total households and among these Christians also, caste divisions are equally visible, the converts chiefly drawn from Maravars and Idayars. The hamlet of Kannappan Kudiyiruppu is the stronghold of these people and they are not as powerful and influential class in Visavanoor, akin to Catholics.

| Community | Households | | Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percentage to total | Number | Percentage to total |
| **HINDUS** | | | | |
| Idayar | 151 | 23.3 | 708 | 22.9 |
| Maravar | 44 | 6.8 | 191 | 6.2 |
| Vellala | 15 | 2.3 | 61 | 2.0 |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 1.9 | 55 | 1.8 |
| Ambattan | 12 | 1.9 | 66 | 2.1 |
| Vannan | 12 | 1.9 | 40 | 1.3 |
| Kammalan | 10 | 1.5 | 61 | 2.0 |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 1.0 | 35 | 1.1 |
| Pandaram | 4 | 0.6 | 23 | 0.7 |
| Brahmin | 2 | 0.3 | 8 | 0.3 |
| Nadar | 2 | 0.3 | 2 | 0.1 |
| **SCHEDULED CASTE** | | | | |
| Parayans | 32 | 4.9 | 167 | 5.4 |
| Pallans | 12 | 1.8 | 54 | 1.7 |
| Chakkiliyans | 10 | 1.5 | 57 | 1.8 |
| Panicker | 4 | 0.6 | 12 | 0.4 |
| Valluvan | 1 | 0.2 | 4 | 0.1 |
| Veduvar | 1 | 0.2 | 2 | 0.1 |
| | **331** | **51.0** | **1546** | **50.0** |
| MUSLIMS | 55 | 8.5 | 249 | 8.1 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 34.8 | 1160 | 37.5 |
| Protestants | 37 | 5.7 | 136 | 4.4 |
| **Total** | **649** | **100.0** | **3091** | **100.0** |

A Maravar cultivator family

A Chettiyar merchant family

## ETHNIC STRUCTURE



**Minor Communities**

15. Apart from Maravars and Idayars, Vellalas or Pillais, Chettiyars or the traders, Ambattans, the barber caste, Vannan, the washermen caste and Kammalans, the village artisans are the important ethnic groups found in Visavanoor and their relative strength is more or less, equal. Parayans, Pallans, and Chakkiliyans are the depressed classes or Scheduled Castes who are mostly agricultural coolies or tied servants to caste Hindus. It will be of interest to the reader to know some ethnographic features of these communities and let us briefly sketch out their customs, manners, social position, cultural heritage etc. Though Idayars form the major bulk of the population, it is the Maravars who have pervasive influence over the village affairs.

**Maravars**

16. Maravars of Visavanoor, all of them belonging to a sub-division of 'Semmanattu Maravar' are old settlers of the region. They take the title of Thevar and their traditional and chief occupation is cultivation of soil. Maravars are one of the 'group of three proud communities' or three clans, the other two clans being Kallar and Agamudiyar. Maravars claim superiority over the other classes and they do not have marital alliance with Kallars and Agamudiyars. Among Maravars, there are various endogamous sub-divisions respectively denominated Sembunattu or Semmanattu, Agatha, Oru-nattu, Upukatti, Kurichikattu etc., and Semmanattu Maravars are the principal sub-division. These people are strong and sturdy having good physique and Marava women are particularly skilled in field labour, working as hard as men do. Marava women in Visavanoor are quite tall and well built and it is said that they are more courageous, besides their physical strength, than any other Hindu women, save perhaps the Paraya and Palla womenfolk! Mr. Edgar Thurston writes in his monumental work 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India' that Maravans are 'of strong limbs and hardy frames, and fierce looking as tigers, wearing long and curled locks of hair'. The name 'Maravar' is quite akin to the Tamil word *Maram* which means killing, bravery, ferocity and the like, as pointing clearly to their unpleasant profession, that of robbing and slaying their neighbours'. But Maravars of Visavanoor and surrounding places are quite law-abiding and pursue agriculture and other peaceable occupations. Maravars elsewhere in this district are said to be a lawless and turbulent class and their *modus operandi* is nothing but robbery, but not the Maravars of this region.

**Etymology of caste**

17. Generally, Maravars seem to be warlike and proud-spirited; they take pride of the fact that the Zamindars of this district belong to their caste. Maravars are said to be a virile community endowed with conspicuous traits and terrain of land Maravars occupy, is more or less of 'Palai' variety and they have been notorious for the 'palai' mode of living *i.e.,* theft and robbery. As to the name of the caste, a common legend runs thus. These people assisted Rama in his famous war against Ravana and so Rama gratefully exclaimed in Tamil '*Maraven*' or 'I will never forget', and so they have ever since been called Maravans. It is also said that the Maravans are the descendants of Guha, Rama's boatman who rowed him across to Lanka (Ceylon). The tradition goes that Rama promised Guha that he would come back at fixed time and when he failed to return, Guha made a fire, whereon to burn himself to death. Hanuman, however, prevented him from committing suicide, and assured him that Rama would shortly return. This come to pass, and Rama, on learning what Guha had done, called him 'Maravan' a brave and reckless fellow. So, the descendants of Guha are called 'Maravans' since then.

**Social precedence**

18. A majority of Maravar families in this village are cultivating owners and they command more influence, besides their social precedence. The President of the Village Panchayat statutorily formed in the year 1960 for the first time and its Vice-President belong to Marava caste. Even from olden days, it is said that the elders of this caste very often administer justice not only among members of their own caste but also to people of inferior castes. Quarrels and other disputes among Pallans Parayans, Shanans etc., are, even to this day, brought to the notice of chief men of Marava community, who settle them amicably. Maravars, standing in an intermediate caste position, wield economic and political power over other minor castes of the village. It is due to their economic strength and

the traditional social precedence, that they exercise more influence than any other caste people in this village. Bigamy is prevalent among Maravars.

**Idayars**

19. Idayars or Yadhavas are the shepherd caste and they are the largest community in Visavanoor, constituting 23 per cent of the village population. They take the title of Konar or Kon, the meaning being King; their traditional occupation is rearing of sheep, and cows and dairying. Konars claim a higher ritual rank among caste Hindus and declare themselves to be the descendants of Lord Krishna. Whatever may be their past glories and claims, now in this region Idayars hold a subordinate place to the cultivating classes like Vellalas, Maravars etc. The Tamil word 'Idayar' means middle, that is neither high nor low class. Another interpretation is that Idayars are so called, being a kind of intermediate link between the farmers and the merchants. Idayars assume a higher ritual rank than they would normally have, owing to the tradition that Lord Krishna was brought up by the community. Idayars are said to have eight principal sub-divisions and each of these is sub-divided into eighteen branches. Idayars of Visavanoor belong to the sub-caste Appachi Idayar. We see eleven Konar families converted to Christianity, six of them are Roman Catholics and the others are Protestants and some of them take the title of 'Konar' after their name *i.e.*, Antony Konar, Mariasusai Konar. The conversion to Christianity has not had any major effect on their general behaviour and their manners and customs are quite the same as their Hindu brethren.

**Customs and manners**

20. Breeding of milch kine, goats, sheep etc., and sale of milk and curd are the traditional occupation of Idayars, but in Visavanoor, roughly three-fourths of the Konar families are cultivators and the rest are landless labourers, save one man doing a Tailor's job. In about ten households, sheep and goats are reared and younger members look after the cattle in their spare hours. Only one Idayar youth has the primary occupation as a shepherd while for ten persons it is only a secondary occupation. Among Yadhava Christians, all of them are either cultivators or farm labourers except one Protestant Christian who has found an employment in the Mission Hospital at Kannappan Kudiyiruppu as an attender. It is said that although Idayars are Vaishnavites by faith, they worship village deities Kaliamman, Mariamman, Ayyanar, Sathiah, Vattamudaiyar, Sangilikaruppan etc., They consider Saturday a sacred day and most of them do not take non-vegetarian food on that day. Sri Jayanthi or Krishna Jayanthi is an important festival for them. Idayars are, in general, non-vegetarians. They are by nature timid and simple in manners. They have their own caste panchayat and Nattanmaikkaran or Kithari settles caste affairs and he manages the work of collecting tax for caste fund, maintaining accounts etc. Idayar women are fond of tattooing and tattooing is, however, losing ground among youngsters. They are not as hard working as Marava women. It is said that child marriages were prevalent among them but now the 'mean age at marriage' among Idayar men and women are 23.9 and 18.4 respectively. We see one woman aged 30 married at the age of 12 and another middle aged woman of 36 married at 13 years of age. It is not common for the young men say around 20, to marry at so an early age. Divorce and divorcee-remarriage is readily permitted and caste panchayat or some elders settles divorce. Unlike Marava women, Yadhava women do not stretch the lobes of their ears and the heavy ear ornament Thandatti is not so common among them. Konar girls are fond of silver 'Thandai' or anklet and 'Onnappu Thattu' and 'Koppu' (middle ear-ring and upper ear-ring) are more common among them. Dowry is less common among Idayars but now among Christian converts of this caste, dowry is paid to the bridegroom either by way of cash or kind. Bigamy is common among them and we come across five Konar men having two living wives at the time of survey.

**Vellalas**

21. There are 15 families belonging to Vellala caste, most of them are small cultivators having little bits of land of their own. Vellalas everywhere are tillers of soil and the very word 'Vellalan' is supposed to be derived from the Tamil word *Vellanmai* which has the meaning of cultivation. They take the title of Pillai. Vellalas are sub-divided into several divisions known as 'Karakattu or Karakatha', 'Aranattu', 'Kongunattu', 'Kodikkal', 'Sozhia', 'Veeragudi', 'Kummangudi' etc., mostly

according to their place of origin. In Visavanoor we come across ten Pillai families belonging to the sub-caste of Karakattu Vellalas, four families of Veeragudi Vellalas and one Kummangudi Pillai. As to the sub-caste 'Karakattu Vellala' the following legend is current. 'Karakattu' means those who saved or protected the clouds; in the reign of Ugra Pandiya, there was a terrible famine which continued for twelve years and so the King being angry, imprisoned all the clouds for their negligence of duties. Indra, the god of clouds approached the king and requested him for the release of the clouds, but he refused to comply until somebody stood as a guarantee for their faithful performance of their duty of sending rain to his kingdom. Some Vellalas came forward at this juncture to safeguard the clouds and hence they are called Karkatha Vellala or Karakattu Vellala.

22. The traditional occupation of Vellalas is tillage and almost all the Vellala families depend on land one way or the other, though one or two members of the family have taken up occupations like teacher, karnam etc. Two Pillais do the work of a mason, as a subsidiary occupation and one runs a small provision store in the hamlet of Thirugukalli. It is said that Vellalas seldom do hard work in fields and as they take hired labour for cultivation of their fields, cost of cultivation becomes exorbitantly high. Seven families are in debt due to high expenses for cultivation. Out of a total number of 15 households, 13 of them own lands and only two families are landless labourers. Vellalas are quickwitted but not physically strong and sturdy. They are most suited to intelligent arithmetic work rather than doing manual or farm labour. In this dry and famine region where cultivation is so precarious, cultivation is not so successful for such people. They are mostly literates and three men are Matriculates, and two have passed E. S. L. C. or Middle School stage. They send their children regularly to school and by far they are more education conscious. Widow re-marriage is not permitted among them and divorce is not tolerated. But among Veeragudi Pillais, two women remain separated from their husbands. Divorcee re-marriage is not common among them. They are generally non-vegetarians but three of the Karakattu sub-sect of Vellala families in main hamlet are returned as vegetarians. Dowry is not usually paid by the bride's parents but it is said that now-a-days offering of dowry is gaining ground among Karakattu Vellalas and three families in the main hamlet are reported to have the practice of giving dowry and two of them borrowed money to pay the dowry. Among other sub-sects dowry is quite an unknown phenomenon. Vellalas claim higher ritual rank over other cultivating castes like Maravar. They are by far caste-minded; they refuse to take food or water from other castes except Brahmin and Chettiyar.

**Chettiyars**

23. Chettiyars, being a trading community, are considered superior class of people and they enjoy a high social position among other castes. Chettiyars everywhere confine themselves to business and mercantile pursuits. They are always keen on their trade and to make money and to become rich is their sole aim at all times. Seldom they prefer farm labour, they are not so suited to hard manual labour like Maravars, Agamudiyars etc. Chettiyars are divided into several sub-castes, Beri Chetty Komati, Vellan Chetty, Vaniya Chetty, Manjaputtur etc. Of the 12 Chettiyar families in this village, 11 belong to Manjaputtur or Manjaputtu sub-division and one to Vaniya Chetty. Manjaputtu Chettiyars are so called since they are believed to have migrated to this region from Manjakuppam of South Arcot district. Manjaputhu Chettiyars are non-vegetarians and they belong to Vaishnavite sect. However, most of them worship village deities such as Ayyanar, Karuppannaswamy, Mariamman and Kaliamman. Of the 12 households, eight households carry on trade on small scale, owning betelnut stall or provision store. Only one Vaniya Chetty woman in the hamlet of Kannappan Kudiyiruppu sells oil, following the traditional job. Except three families, others have some land of their own, most of them ranging from one to five acres and only one having ten acres. They look after their trade themselves and employ hired labourers for cultivation of lands, themselves doing supervision of work. They do not let out their lands. Women do not go in for farm-labour; of the 31 Chetty women, four are workers, of which one is selling oil and the three others are merely supervising the cultivation in their own fields. Generally other women confine themselves to cooking and household duties and occasionally they assist their husbands or male members in the trade by looking after the shop for a while. Men and women are not having good physique and they are

mostly fair-complexioned. Dowry system is widely prevalent among them and eight families are reported to have offered dowry, according to the present enquiry. Old and middle-aged women among them stretch the lobes of their ears, wearing an antiquated ear-ornament called Thandatti or Pambadam. 'Golusu' is the favourite anklet worn by youngsters. The mother tongue of these Chettiyars is Tamil and Telugu - speaking Chetties are not found here or in this region. Bigamy and widow re-marriage are not common among them.

**Kammalans**

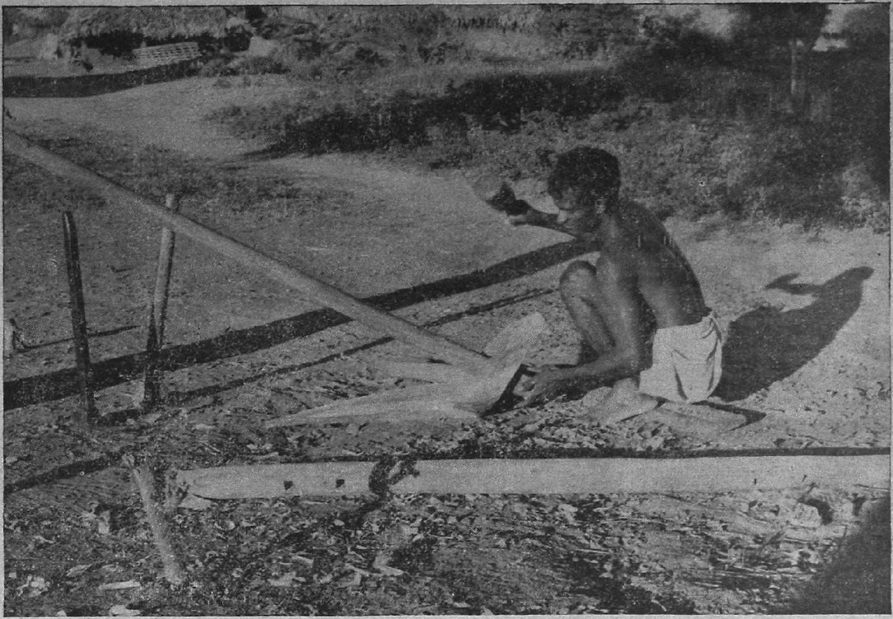
24. Kammalans, better known as 'Asaris' are the artisan castes comprising of five sub-divisions viz., Thattans (goldsmith), Kollans (blacksmith), Kannans (brass-smith), Thachans (carpenter), and Kal-Thachans (stone-smith); there are ten Kammalan households in Visavanoor and nine of them follow the traditional occupation; some families own small bits of lands and cultivate themselves besides their caste occupation, and one Kammalan family lives solely on agricultural labour. Kammalans, belonging to goldsmith, carpenter, and blacksmith are found in Visavanoor and other two classes of people are not living here. The name 'Panchala' may, perhaps have the reference to the five-fold occupational groups mentioned above. It is said, on the origin of the name that "the original form of the name Kammalan appears to have been Kannalan or Kannalar, both of which occur in Tamil poems, e.g., *Thondamandala Sathakam* and *Er Ezhuvathu* attributed to the celebrated poet Kamban. Kannalan denotes one who rules the eye, or one who gives the eye. When an image is made, its consecration takes place at the temple. Towards the close of the ceremony, the Kammalan who made it comes forward, and carves out the eyes of the image." All the five divisions of Kammalans take the title of Asari; some of them, like Brahmins adopt the title of 'Achari', meaning religious teacher, instead of 'Asari'. They always claim for a higher place in the social scale; they wear the *poonul* or sacred thread like Brahmins. It is claimed by them that they were descended from Visvakarma, the architect of gods, and they very often call themselves Visva-Brahmins or Viswakarmas. According to the legend there were five sons to Viswakarma, by name, Manu, Maya, Silpa, Tvashtra and Daivagna. The descendants of these five are the five class of craftsmen; those engaged in smithy are known as Manus; Kammalans who do carpentry are called Mayars; those who attend to stone-carving are named Silpis and Tvashtras are the persons doing metal work, and the goldsmiths are said to be Daivagnas. The Kammalans are generally saivites and Kamatchi Amman is the chief goddess of this caste, who is identified with Parvathi; Kamatchi Amman who is also called 'Vrithi Deivam', is worshipped by all the five sub-divisions of Kammalans and girls are very often named after this deity. In regard to the exact connection of Kamatchi with this caste, it is said that 'she was one of the virgins who committed suicide by throwing herself into a fire and was in consequence deified. Kammalans also worship the local deities like Ayyanar, Mariamman etc., and they sacrifice fowls or goats at the time of puja. Generally, Kammalans follow their occupation, generation after generation, and they seldom teach their craft to other caste people, and guard the secrets of craft. They usually bring up their boys in their traditional jobs, smithy or carpentry, whichever it may be. We see only three cases, where these people have deviated from the traditional craft, and taken up agriculture. There is always a complaint among them that sufficient work is not forthcoming in this rural area, even after taking offer in the nearby villages. A carpenter, or a smith normally takes more than one village, if the village is small and if the village is large, he is confined to one or two hamlets alone. Seldom he allows other persons to take any offer of work within his jurisdiction; there is always a general agreement regarding the jurisdiction of work among these artisans. Roughly a carpenter earns Rs. 400 in a year. He is paid in terms of grains by a large number of cultivating households.

**Goldsmith**

25. The goldsmith, living in the hamlet of Kalladithidal, makes jewellery of gold and silver for the villagers. He has his tiny workshop in front of his house itself; his furnace is an earthen pot, his bellows an iron pipe and his crucible is made then and there and thrown away when no longer required. Only on marriage occasions and festival seasons, he is fully employed; generally the jewels made by him are of native design which varies from caste to caste; they are articles of beautiful workmanship and delicate texture, but of course, they lack good finish and novelty of design.

**Blacksmith**

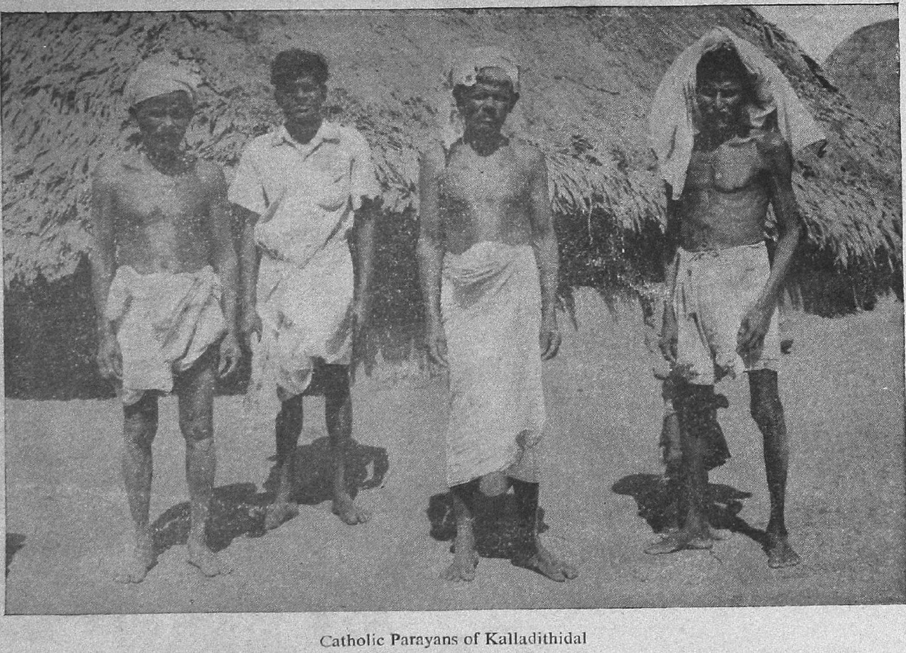
26. Blacksmith or Kollan, as is usually called, makes *Kozhu* or iron blade for the plough and supplies the villagers with sickles, *Manvetti* or spade, crowbars, axes, *Pannaruvals* or reaping-hooks, and such useful implements. Locks and keys, common



The village carpenter sitting on the roadside and doing carpentry work.

Village barber sitting in the backyard of a house doing his service.

Adi-dravidas, the so-called 'exterior caste' living in the separate *Cheri* on the outskirts of the hamlet.

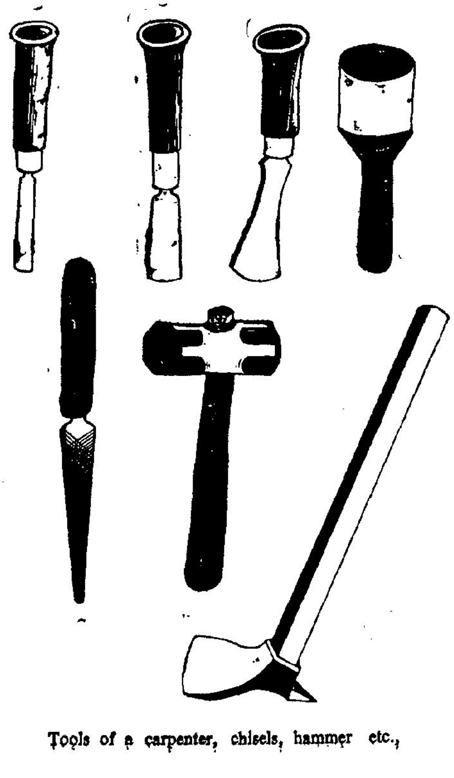


Catholic Parayans of Kalladithidal

knives, hooks, *Aruvalmanais* or kitchen-slicers are also made by him. Blacksmith has his workshop beneath a tree or under a thatched shed; he possesses a few hammers of varying size, a bellows and some pincers and with these instruments he works all types of implements and household tools to the satisfaction of the village people. Especially during the ploughing seasons, his services are in much demand and his tiny workshop is usually crowded with peasants who come to him in order to get their agricultural implements repaired or new ones made. Generally, the blacksmith seldom goes to fetch work and the villagers bring their own work to him and take it back when it is finished. Very often he is annually paid in grains, by each cultivating household and some pay money for making household tools like kitchen-slicer.

**Carpenter**

27. Two carpenters are there in Visavanoor who cater the needs of the villagers; the village carpenters make wooden ploughs, manvetti or spade, Kalaikothi or weeding tool etc., and only on rare occasions they receive offer of work like making doors, doorsteps, windows etc. Furniture are made by them occasionally, only on special order from some well-to-do people. The village carpenter is seen, sitting under a shady tree and doing his carpentry work. He sits on the ground and holds the wood between his feet. He has a limited set of tools which consists of one or two hammers, chisels, and a saw. The saw has its teeth set towards the handle and with these instruments, he makes all types of agricultural implements, furniture etc., required by the villagers. The carpenter is usually paid in grains, at the time of harvest once a year. He gets normally eight Madras measures of paddy or 12 Madras measures of varagu or other millet grains. Only when he makes some furniture or when he engages in building activities, he receives his wages in money.



Tools of a carpenter, chisels, hammer etc.,

**Ambattans**

28. Ambattans, the barber caste people, occupy an important place in the Hindu social system, though considered as a low caste in the social scale. They take the title of Pandithar; it is said, on the origin of the name, that the word *Ambattan* is 'usually derived from the Sanskrit '*amba*' (near) and '*stha*' (to stand) i.e., he who stands near to shave his clients or treat his patients'. Each caste has its own barber. The barber's occupation is hereditary and they follow the religious beliefs of the majority of their customers. Of the 12 Ambattan families in Visavanoor, all families stick to the traditional job of hair-cutting and shaving; but ten of them carry on cultivation besides their traditional work. It is curious to note that the barber in the main village is one of the biggest landlords; all the brothers in that household live together under a common roof; still more curious is that despite their wealth, two or three members attend to the traditional service by turn, while the remaining persons look after cultivation. Muslims and Christians have separate barbers, while Harijans do not employ barbers and somebody among themselves attends to shaving. There is no saloon maintained by the barber; nor even there is a fixed place for him to render his service. The village barber may be seen sitting by the road side or in the backyard of a house or beneath a shady tree shaving the head and face of his customer who sits opposite to him. The barber carries a small bag wrapped in a cloth or a tiny box, containing one or two razors, a pair of scissors, a small mirror, a knife and a piece of leather on which to sharpen the razors. Very often, the barber uses the inner part of his arm to sharpen the razor; seldom he uses soap or any antiseptics! Barbers are usually,

employed as 'go-betweens' in the arrangement of marriages, funerals and feasts and act as 'masters of ceremonies' on these occasions. They are the general news-agents of the village; gossip is the *modus operandi* of the village barbers. They dabble in medicine also and barber's wife is the usual midwife attending to delivery. Barbers are paid usually in terms of grain, either paddy or varagu, from each of the cultivating households and others pay in cash.

**Vannans**

29. Vannans, the washermen caste are seen in all villages; in Visavanoor there are 12 families spreading over in all the hamlets, except in West Visavanoor and Kannappan Kudiyiruppu. They are the washermen of the village community. The term *Vannan* is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Vannam' or 'Varnam' which means colour or beauty. Due to the very nature of their job viz., washing the dirty clothes, they are considered low in the eyes of the society and they hold the ritual rank just above the Ambattans. Vannans are said to be the descendants of the mythological hero Veerabadra. The traditional legend goes that Veerabadra was ordered by Lord Siva to wash the clothes of all men, as an expiation of the sin of putting many people to death in Daksha's yaga. Vannans are saivites and however they worship demon gods and evil spirits. According to the present enquiry the *Kuladeivams* or family gods worshipped by the washermen of Visavanoor are returned as Maduraiveeran, Kaliamman, Mariamman, Ayyanar, Karuppannasamy etc. They are non-vegetarians; however, they do not take beef and pork. The dhoby washes all the clothes of both men and women, his wife and children assisting him in the work. As there is no river in the nearby, the dhoby takes the clothes to ponds with the help of one or two poor uncared for asses he possesses. He needs no apparatus, except a big earthen vessel called 'Thazhi' and an open fire place. The dirty clothes are dipped in water mixed with some alkaline water (water with washing soda or some kind of mud) and then they are steamed. He beats the dirty clothes on the stones and the work is, of course, tedious. He sings sweet and melodious songs and thus the tediousness is not keenly felt. All the Vannan families in Visavanoor follow this traditional job, except one man working as a headmaster in the local Panchayat Union Elementary School, who is, however, a migrant from Aruppukottai taluk of Ramanathapuram district. Of the eleven native dhoby families, only two familes own some lands and do cultivation, besides washing, Dhoby is paid annually in terms of grain and he receives cash for ironing of clothes, which is done only occasionally. At weddings and funerals he gets a nominal *bakshis;* at the funeral processions he spreads the clean clothes on the way to the grave-yard. He and his family members have the privilege and habit of wearing the clothes of the villagers and nobody resents this.

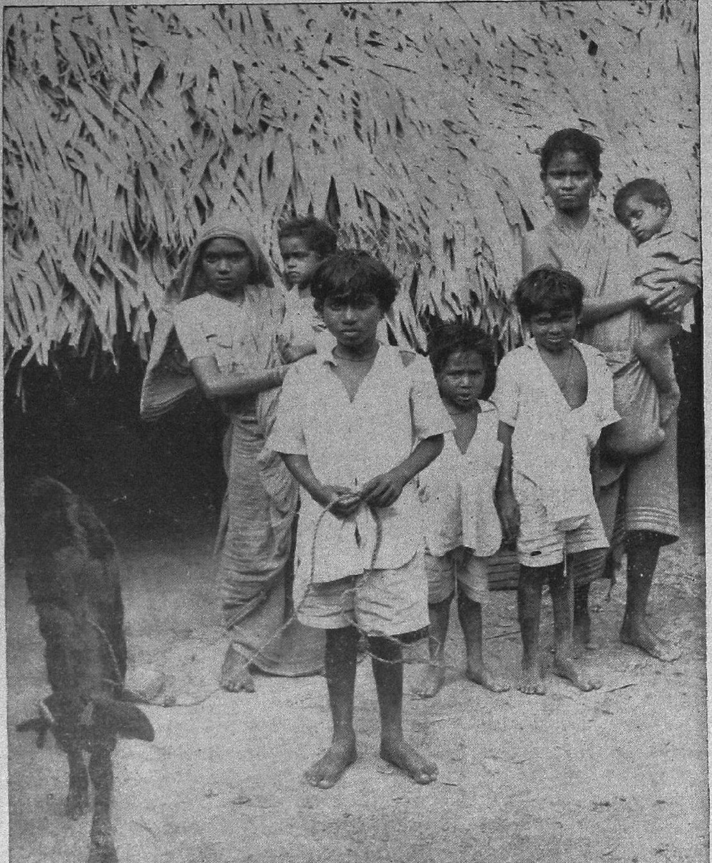
**Customs**

30. The dhobies of this village serve only the caste Hindus and Christians. Harijans or depressed classes do not have washermen as they themselves wash their clothes. In other villages of this region, there are a distinct class of Vannans called 'Podara Vannans' who do washing for inferior castes and Podara Vannans are regarded as low and inferior to Vannans. Payment of bride price by the bridegroom is prevalent among Vannans; it is otherwise called *Mulaippl cooli* or reward of suckling, which is given to the mother for having brought up the girl. Dowry is not common among them. Widow marriage is both permitted and practised. Vannans are very poor and they live in quite small and miserable huts. On an average, a dhoby family earns Rs. 45 per month, and they lead a hand-to-mouth life. They are generally illiterates; among men seven are literates out of 20 and there is no Vannan woman or girl who can either read or write. A son of a dhoby in Visavanoor becomes a dhoby and the occupation is followed generation after generation. Shift from traditional occupation is rather inconceivable for these washermen.

**Pandarams**

31. Four Pandaram families are living in this village, two families in the hamlet of North Visavanoor and the other two in the small settlement known as 'Kuddithidal' in the northern corner of main village. Pandarams are religious mendicants, priests or pujaris of Non-brahmin shrines and their title is also Pandaram; but some of them take the title of 'Pillai'. Two men in the hamlet of North Visavanoor are the pujaris or priests in the local temples and they own small bits of dry land and look after cultivation of their lands besides priesthood. One Pandaram family in the main hamlet lives chiefly on a petty restaurant and the other family subsists mainly on agricultural labour, their lands being uneconomic small holding. Widow-marriage and divorce are not permitted; dowry system is quite an unknown

Pallar women, strong and sturdy, are skilled workers in fields.



Shanars, the palmyra tappers.

phenomenon for them. Bigamy and child marriages are not common among Pandarams. They are saivites and non-vegetarians by tradition.

**Harijans**

32. Adi-dravidas are considered as the lowest among Hindu castes and Pallans, Parayans and Chakkiliyans are chief among these so called 'exterior castes' to whom Gandhiji has given the name of *Harijans*, the beloveds of God! Of these three castes, Parayas are numerically strong; 32 households are of Hindu Parayas and 26 households are of Catholic converts. There are twelve Hindu Pallan families and six Catholic families. Families of Chakkiliyans, the traditional leather workers number 10, all of them being Hindus. Pallans, Parayans and Chakkiliyans are generally agricultural serfs of the land owning caste Hindus and their settlements are situated a little away from the residential streets and settlements of caste Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Even in the Catholic hamlets like Kalladithidal and Suriyankottai, Catholic Parayans and Pallans, live in separate *Cheris* on the outskirts of the hamlet and not amidst the streets of other Catholics. The settlements of these polluting castes are called *Cheri;* clusters of Pallans' huts are known as Pallacheri and the settlements of Parayans are called Paracheri. Even among these castes social rank is not identical; Parayans are ranked just below Pallans and Chakkiliyans are in the lowest rung of the social ladder.

**Pallans**

33. Pallans everywhere are mostly agricultural labourers and the tradition goes that they were created by Devendra for purpose of labouring on behalf of Vellalas. It is a well known truth in rural parts that Pallans are a hard working class most suited to wet cultivation, and especially Pallar women are skilled workers for weeding, transplanting and harvesting operations. They are strong and sturdy and dark in colour. Another legend regarding their origin says that the sweat of Devendra, fell on a plant growing in water and from there arose a child, who is said to have been the original ancestor of the Pallans. Some opine that the name of their caste would have been derived from the Tamil word *Pallam* meaning a pit, in which place they were standing when the castes were formed. It is also said to be derived from low ground or wet cultivation in which they are considered to be experts. This is another different view. There are a large number of sub-divisions among Pallans viz., Amma, Atha, Agna, Aiya etc., and all families here belong to the sub-caste of Amma Pallans. They are economically backward and primarily depend on caste Hindus or Muslims, as they are working as tied servants to them. Pallans own small bits of dry lands and do cultivation but to supplement their income they go in for agricultural labour. Except in one cultivating family in the hamlet of West Visavanoor, all the Pallan families work as coolies in other's fields, though they own lands. Two families do not own any bit of land. Almost all of them being illiterates, nobody has switched over to any other job except agricultural cooly. Out of the total workers among them, 39 per cent are cultivators, mostly with agricultural labour as secondary occupation, and 61 per cent are returned as agricultural labourers. Pallans consider themselves superior to Parayans and Chakkiliyans and they refuse to take food or water from a Parayan or Chakkiliyan. It seems there is an unending rivalry among Pallans and Parayans each claiming superiority over the other. Pallans do not eat beef while Parayans do take it. Apart from taking beef, Parayans have the task of removing dead bodies of cattle and watching the cremation grounds. For such reasons, Pallans claim a higher social rank. Payment of dowry is not prevalent among Pallans and bigamy is not common. Widow re-marriage and divorcee's marriage are allowed among them. But among Christian Pallans, divorce is not tolerated by the Church authorities. The customs and manners of Christian Pallans in several aspects remain the same as among Hindu Pallans.

**Parayans**

34. Among the depressed classes, Parayans form the largest group in this village. Among Hindu castes, they held third rank in numerical strength just below Maravars. Among Catholics, 26 households were converted from Parayan caste, 23 of them concentrated in the hamlet of Kalladithidal and the rest in Suriyankottai. Hindu Parayans are mostly found in Thirugukalli where 22 families are living and seven families in main hamlet and three in Kalladithidal. Parayans or Parayas are said to be out-castes and their traditional occupations are to remove and sell dead cattle, to beat tom-tom on festive occasions and to watch over burial grounds in the night. Vettiyans are taken from this caste and they do all kinds of menial duties. The origin of the name Parayan may be attributed to the Tamil word *Parai* which means a drum since it is Parayans who act as drummers at the time of funerals, festivals etc., and on occasions when Government announcements are proclaimed. There are as many as

348 sub-castes among Parayans and Parayans in this village belong to three different sub-divisions 'Thotti' 'Atha' and 'Visvakara', most of them coming under the last sub-caste. Parayans of Visavanoor are mostly agricultural serfs of the land-owning castes and they are miserably poor. They live in huts that barely provided shelter in the best of seasons and are prey to every inclemancy of the weather. In Paracheri we see dirt and filth everywhere. They are half-starved and half-clothed. Paraya women wear sarees quite filthy in appearance; a cloth once purchased at harvest time is worn till it falls into pieces. Quite a pathetic sight, it is to see the young Parayan boys and girls hardly enough to wear, playing amidst the dirt and filth commonly found in Paracheri. The very hut in which Parayans live is the breeding ground of cholera and other epidemics. Socially handicapped, they are economically oppressed class in the society.

35. The statistics relating to the possession of land and income clearly tell the sad tale of their economic life. Of the 32 Hindu Parayan families, only three own some pieces of land, and even those are quite uneconomic holdings. So they too take up agricultural cooly work besides own cultivation and practically all are agricultural coolies, with no assured income. They are hard working people. They live a hand-to-mouth living and a Parayan, is never sure whether he will earn for the day's food for himself and his family. Caste system plays a major role in determining the occupation, social status and economic position. These depressed classes have been assigned occupations like carrying dead cattle, cleaning of streets, etc. Generations after generations they are the serfs of the higher castes and they cannot dream of going in for better employment. As they do these odd jobs which are socially tabooed for other caste Hindus, they are considered inferior castes and they are unable to come up; they cannot break away from the traditional social shackles. Dowry is quite an unknown thing among Parayans. Divorcee re-marriage and widow re-marriage are quite common among them. All of them are non-vegetarians and they take beef, pork etc. They eat even the flesh of dead cattle. But due to their poverty they take meat or fish once in a month; fish being the cheaper one, intake of fish is more frequent among them. They are saivites by tradition. Ayyanar, Karuppasamy, Muthiahsamy, Kali etc., are the caste gods.

**Chakkiliyans**

36. Chakkiliyans or Chakkiliyas are the traditional leather workers and shoe-makers, who are in the lowest rung of the Hindu social ladder. Ten Chakkiliyan households are living in Visavanoor and they take the title of 'Pagadai'. There are many sub-castes among Chakkili caste and people of Visavanoor belong to three sub-divisions 'Amma', 'Thotti' and 'Murasu'. Of the 10 Chakkili families, nobody follows the traditional job and all are landless labourers working in the fields of caste Hindus and Muslims. Their life is so miserable and never they get full employment. They are a hard-working and active race. They were formerly drunkards and at weddings they were used to merry-making by taking arrack. However, after prohibition, this custom is slowly losing ground. They eat meat of any kind including beef and even the flesh of dead animal. Parayans and Pallans refuse to enter the house of Chakkiliyans or to drink water from their hands. Payment of bride price to the bride's parents is common and dowry is quite an unknown phenomenon. Divorce is common and Chakkiliyans never hesitate to divorce even for trivial matters.

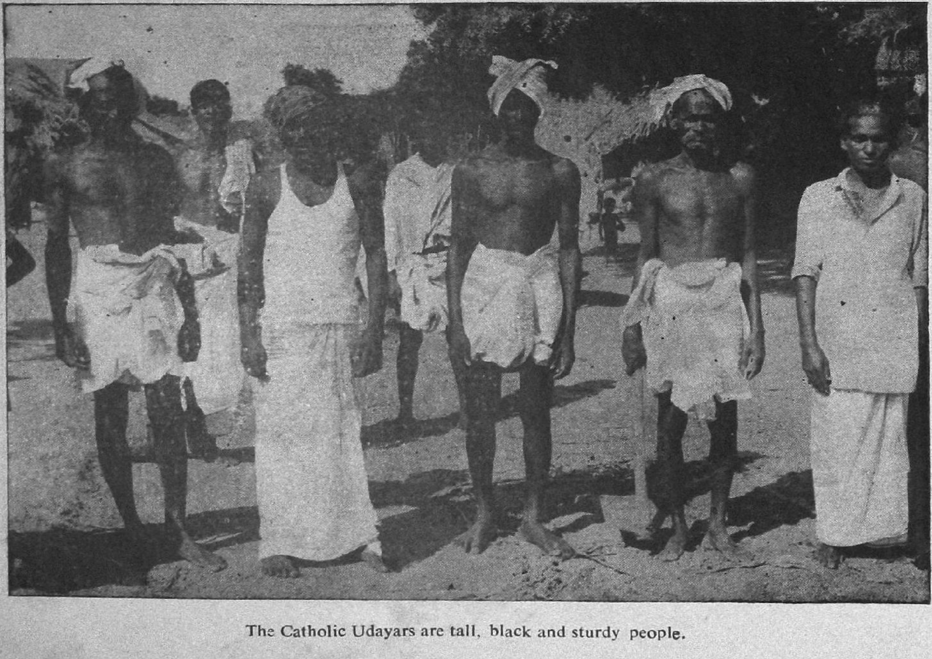
**Kuravars**

37. There is only one family of Kuravars in the hamlet of West Visavanoor and these Kurava women solely live on basket-making and receiving alms. They live in a small hut very close to the Pallan's settlement in the southern corner of the hamlet; the house and the surroundings are kept most unclean and dirty. Their dresses are filthy and they are no better than dirty rags. Kuravars are a gipsy tribe found all over in the rural parts in this part of the country; now some of them have given up their nomad life and settled in villages. Kuravars of Visavanoor, who style themselves 'Veduvar' have the full right of service to the village people here and seldom they tolerate any other Kuravan family to come to this village and compete in their profession of basket-making. Kuravars are like some other aboriginal tribes, devil worshippers and social morality is no concern of theirs. Divorce is more common and frequent among them and widows remarry as a rule. It is said that Kuravars came from mountaineous regions to the plain country and they took the occupations of fortune telling, bird-catching, tattooing, basket-making etc. They are also noted for pilfering and at the time of large fairs and festivals, Kuravans stealthily move about amidst the crowd and in a moment's time, they steal some ornaments, finger rings etc. Even to this day the movement of Kuravars is periodically watched by the Police authorities from the nearest Police Station. Now all the male members in this Kuravan family have left, only the two old women remain here; they are

A poor Kuravan family which lives on basket-making and begging.

Rowthers in the main hamlet. They are easily recognised from their dress, shaven head and cultivation of beard.

A Muslim family—men always wear lunghi ; women also wear lunghi, Kuppayam and an upper cloth.



The Catholic Udayars are tall, black and sturdy people.

half-starved and half-clothed. They mainly live on begging and they earn negligible money by way of basket-making.

**Muslims**

38. While entering the main hamlet, we see the mosque, the tallest building and from the mosque run two Muslim streets which are parallel to each other. There are 55 Muslim households, all of them are Rowthers belonging to the sub-division of 'Hanafi' of Sunny sect. The Mohammedan faith is divided into two major sects viz., Sunnies and Shiahs and Muslims of this village and surrounding region are Sunnies. In the villages around, we come across Mohammedans of Shafi sub-division and both the people inter-dine and inter-marry and both the groups come under 'Sunnies'. Only Labbais are considered low in the social scale among Muslims. The 'Sunnies' hold the view that Abu Baker, Umar and Usman were the lawful successors of the Prophet while the Shiahs think that they were usurpers and defrauded Ali of his right to the Kalif. This is the major gulf between these two sects. It is said that the Shiahs do not have belief in saints; and the Sunnies say that the time for alteration of spiritual and temporal law ceased with the four Imams Shafai, Abu Hanifa, Malik and Hambal and this was the reason for the advent of four different schools viz., Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki and Hambali. All the Mohammedans in Visavanoor belong to the Hanafi school of Sunny sect. Their mother tongue is only Tamil and not Urdu and this fact suggests that the Mohammedans of Visavanoor are converts from Hinduism in comparatively recent past. They have no caste distinctions or divisions; they may be easily recognised from their mode of dress, shaven head and cultivation of the beard. Men wear always lunghi and baniyan while women among them have lunghi, 'Kuppayam' or a bodice and an upper cloth. Some wear Hindu robe of saree with the common jacket or bodice. The dress of women is generally of cotton and the ceremonial dress is silk or silk with embroidery. Most of the people both men and women wear wooden sandals or leather chappals. The mother tongue is Tamil and the only one Labbai who is also the 'imam' of the mosque knows Arabi. Though the Muslims read Kuran in Arabi, hardly there is any one who write Arabi.

39. Muslims here are practically half-Hindus in customs, manners, thought and speech. Some customs are clearly Hindu in origin, such as tying of Thali, use of music in weddings etc. Women do not observe the *Gosha* or seclusion; as most of the families are small cultivators, women go to their fields very often and seclusion from men is naturally not possible. Out of 55 Muslim households, 48 own some wet or dry land and the average size of holding per family works out to 5. 48 acres, such an average for the whole land owning people in the village being 4.88. Agricultural labourers are very few among them. It is said that in recent years, lands are sold by Hindu castes to these people. Of a total number of 99 workers among them, 81 look after own-cultivation, fourteen are agricultural labourers, one owning a tea shop and another man is a lease cultivator and the rest are doing some odd jobs. Economically strong, Muslims wield more influence in the village affairs. Rowthers are usually quiet and timid and their relations with local Hindus are very friendly and quite normal. Besides timid, they are as much superstitous as the Hindus; fear of ghosts is widely prevalent among these people, particularly of those who died of violent death or suicide. Muslims are above caste divisions and though they are converts, nobody remembers the name of the caste from which his forefathers were drawn. This is a great difference between Christian converts and Mohammedans. There is a large amount of unity among Muslims and they possess caste fund also, besides caste panchayat.

**Christians**

40. Forty per cent of the village population are Christians; of the 263 Christian households, 226 are Catholic families and the remaining are Protestants. In regard to the numerical strength by households, Catholics form 34.8 per cent of the total, while they account for 37.5 per cent of the village population. Among Protestants, a reverse trend is noticed, which indicates that Protestants have comparatively thinner households. Protestant Christians are found only in Kannappan Kudiyiruppu where the American Mission Hospital is located. Catholics are living mostly in Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli. Among Catholics, Udayars are prominent both in numerical strength and economic superiority. The other converts are from the castes of Parayans, Shanans, Pallans, Idayars and Vellalas. Even among the Christians the caste distinctions still prevail and the tendency generally found among them to style themselves as Udayar Christians, Parayan Christians, Nadar Christians etc., and not Christians as a whole religious group. Christianity has not escaped from the contagion of caste. The caste divisions are not discarded

or objected to by the missionary too and caste has survived down to the present day unlike Muslim community. Parayans and Pallans among Catholics are somehow held in a low position even though they convert to Christian faith; Udayars still hesitate to treat these caste people on equal terms. Parayans and Pallans are mostly agricultural serfs to these Udayar Catholics and the economic dependence of inferior castes is a chief factor influencing the social ranks and ritual precedence, even after conversion to Christianity.

**Udayars**

41. All the Udayar families are Catholics and they are migrants from Chola country viz., Tiruchirapalli and Thanjavur districts. They are living in these dry tracts for several generations and nobody remembers the ancestors who had come over to this region and their memories have gone into oblivion. Udayars are hard working cultivating class, who are better suited to dry farming. Udayars are tall, black and sturdy people. They have good physique and robust appearance. Most of them are cultivators and only 17 families come under 'agricultural labourers' and four are teachers in Primary Schools. Ninety one families, out of 97 own lands and the average size of holding among Udayar cultivators works out to 7.20 acres which is comparatively high. Socially advanced, Udayars are exercising a much more influence due to their economic strength, especially in the three hamlets where they predominate viz., Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli. It is said that the original place of these Udayars was South Arcot district and they spread to Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli districts and then they migrated to Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts. Udayars have fifteen exogamous sub-divisions, known as *kanis*, derived from places where their different ancestors are supposed to have lived e.g., Ariyalur, Puthur, Kolathur, Kannanur etc. They are a fine race, simple and law-abiding. Udayarpalayam of Tiruchirapalli district, is the place where these people concentrate, which is indicated by the name itself. Though the ancestral land of Udayars of Visavanoor is Tiruchirapalli district, now they have lost contact with their brethren in Tiruchirapalli district. Widow re-marriage is permitted and dowry is paid to the bridegroom. Divorce and bigamy are not permitted among them by the Catholic regulations. However, according to the present enquiry there was only one Udayar woman, separated from her husband. Divorcee re-marriage will not be tolerated and no divorcee can have his or her wedding celebrated in the Catholic church. Economically they are well off; most of them, being cultivators on own fields, toil hard day in and day out and turn the soil to full account and acquire a sumptuous harvest. They consider themselves socially superior to other Catholic converts viz., Catholic Nadars, Idayars, Parayans etc.

**Shanans**

42. The Shanans, best known as palmyra-climbing and toddy-tapping caste form 1.5 per cent of the village population. Of the ten Shanan families, only two belong to Hinduism and the rest are Roman Catholics. Catholic Nadars are found in Kalladithidal, North Visavanoor and Suriyankottai hamlets. Their caste title is Nadar; after the introduction of prohibition, there is a change from their traditional occupation to farm labour. Some Shanans, of course, draw 'Pathaneer' or palmyra juice from palmyra trees during the seasons. It is generally said that Shanans are persevering and resourceful cultivators and unwearied tappers of the palmyra. They are hard workers and it is usually said that "if water exists under the earth, a Shanan will find it and quickly convert a patch of poor soil into a luxuriant garden". They climb the palmyra and coconut trees in an ingenious way, tap them and extract the juice, which they boil into a coarse form of palm sugar or distil into intoxicating drink known as toddy. Due to introduction of prohibition, they tap palmyra for pathaneer or neera, a kind of palm juice without fermentation and sell them during the seasons only and in the rest of the year, they work as coolies or tied labourers to the cultivators of higher castes. However, in all these households atleast one member looks after the tapping work. Shanans, are hard working and industrious race; they are short and sturdy, and usually dark in colour. They are clearly of a non-Aryan origin even though the Shanans of Tirunelveli and other southern districts have endeavoured to prove that they have descended from Kshatriyas. Shanans live in a separate cluster of houses, a little removed from other caste Hindus and even they are allowed to draw water from the same public tank as other caste Hindus do, but they should take water at a particular corner, different from the place at which higher caste people take water. In the hamlet of Vadakku Visavanoor, the Shanars' houses are located in a distant corner, *Shanakkudi* as they call it; the Maravars and other higher caste people refuse to be contaminated by Shanans; the ritual rank for the

Shanans is generally just above the Adi-dravidas. Even among Roman Catholics these people do not enjoy any social prestige and Udayars treat them as inferiors even after conversion to Christianity. Seven out of eight Catholic Nadar families own lands, mostly small bits; the average size of holding per family is 94 cents. The conversion to Christianity did not bring about any major change in their customs and manners—they follow the traditional work of tapping still. Apart from Udayars and Shanans, there are Pallans and Parayans who are converts from Hinduism and there are six Catholic Idayar families and two Vellala families too, mostly in Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli. Of the three Catholic churches in these places, the one at Kalladithidal is big and magnificient; it is also the seat of the Parish Priest who is supervising the other two churches.

**Protestants**

43. Kannappan Kudiyiruppu, the southern-most hamlet is the place of concentration of Protestant Christians, and not even a single family lives in any other hamlet. The Protestant church is located there and also the American Mission dispensary which is doing yeoman service not only for Christians but for people of all caste and creed. Casteism is prevalent even among Protestants but not to a large extent as found among Catholics. They are chiefly drawn from Marava and Yadhava castes. The occupational pattern is so varied among Protestants; most of them are teachers and agricultural coolies. Of a total number of 67 workers among them, 26 are cultivators on own lands, three are lease cultivators, 21 labourers; there are three teachers in elementary schools, two midwives, one pharmacist and one hospital assistant, one pastor etc. Even among Protestants, the different caste groups do not inter-marry, though they tolerate inter-dining. Widow marriage, divorcee-marriage are allowed among them. Bigamy is not tolerated and dowry is not offered to the bridegroom. Among Protestants, literacy rate is high and there are as many as five Matriculates, most of them working as teachers. Customs and manners among them are more akin to those of the respective Hindu castes.

**Marriage customs**

44. Among Hindus, marriage is regarded as a sacred duty, a duty which a father should carry out for his children. Marriage fills their imagination from infancy to age. Rare it is to find any bachelor or spinster in this village especially among Hindus. A family with a marriageable daughter unmarried is considered to be under bad luck or under the displeasure of the gods; no member of the male sex considers himself respectable until he is married. The weddings are generally arranged and settled by the parents and courtship is not common. A betrothal ceremony is usually held prior to marriage, when the agreement is made between the bridal party and the bride groom party in the presence of elders of the community. Marriage customs vary with different castes among Hindus, but in the generality of marriages, the bride groom and the bride are first seated together; then they walk round three times an altar on which a fire burns and then worship the deity. The 'Thali' or symbol of marriage, is tied around the neck of the bride, by the groom. The couple is then blessed by the parents, near-relatives, Nattanmaikarar or leaders of the caste etc. Betel leaves are distributed to the guests; dinner is served then. Marriage is an expensive affair, especially among caste Hindus. Large sums of money are spent on marriage ceremony and feast. It is common to see a person in the humblest rank, spending all the money in his possessions, or borrowing, in the wedding of one of his daughters or sons and trusting the Almighty for the means wherewith to marry the others. The expenditure on marriage varies from caste to caste and family to family; anyway this very often is taken to be the index of the social standing. People do not hesitate to borrow money just to spend on such occasions. Only one Udayar family spends more than Rs. 1,000. Forty five per cent of the families spend between Rs. 101 and 200 on a wedding occasion. The expenditure in as many as 27 households falls below Rs. 50 and these families are mostly Hindu Parayars and Catholics. Generally, Muslims spend much on such occasions; out of 55 families, 30 families, spend from Rs. 201 to 400 per marriage and one household is reported to have spent about Rs. 400 but below Rs. 600. Udayars also spend equally a high amount on weddings. Table No. III shows the pattern of expenditure on marriage of different communities in the village.

**Birth customs**

45. The birth of a child is an event of great importance especially among major Non-brahmin

### TABLE No. III

### Expenditure on Marriage

| Community | No. of households | Number of households with expenditure on marriage | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nil | Rs. 50 or less | Rs. 51-100 | Rs. 101-200 | Rs. 201-400 | Rs. 401-600 | Rs. 601-800 | Rs. 801-1,000 | Rs. 1,001 and over |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| Idavar | 151 | ... | 6 | 34 | 71 | 36 | 4 | ... | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 44 | ... | 1 | 8 | 21 | 11 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... |
| Parayar | 32 | ... | 5 | 19 | 7 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | ... | 2 | ... | 6 | 3 | 4 | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallan | 12 | ... | ... | 5 | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | ... | ... | 3 | 3 | 6 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Asari | 10 | ... | ... | 2 | 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | ... | 5 | 3 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | ... | 3 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 1 | ... | | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 55 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 20 | 30 | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | ... | 6 | 66 | 99 | 49 | 5 | ... | ... | 1 |
| Protestants | 37 | ... | 2 | 5 | 27 | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Total | 649 | 2 | 27 | 161 | 293 | 147 | 16 | 2 | ... | 1 |

castes. The Hindu belief is that a man must have a son to save him from hell! If the newly born is a son, the occasion is one of much rejoicing and joy and if the child happens to be a girl, little joy is expressed and silence will prevail generally instead of rejoicing. A proverb is current attributing 'silence' to the mood prevailing in a house where a girl is born, which runs as follows: 'பெண் பிள்ளை பிறந்த வீடு போல்'. This may be due to the belief that only sons can perform the funeral ceremony of the parents, on which their happiness in the future world depends and also on account of great expenses necessarily attending on a daughter's marriage. Among caste Hindus, only Vellalas, Maravars, Konars,

Pandarams etc., observe some ceremonies and inferior castes such as Pallans, Parayans, Chakkiliyans, Panikkans etc., are not particular on this. Among the higher castes, *Punniahavachanam* or sixteenth day ceremony is performed on the sixteenth day after the birth of a child. The intervening days are considered as days of pollution and the mother and child are kept separately. On the sixteenth day, the house is cleaned with water and walls are white-washed. The urine of cow is sprinkled and smoke of myrrh is raised. A simple feast is served to the guests, who in turn present gifts to the child or mother of the child, in the form of money or in kind. Ear-boring ceremony and hair-removing ceremony are held either in third or fifth month, generally in odd number of the month after the birth of the child. The 'hair-removing' ceremony is very often held in front of the Ayyanar temple or their family god or goddess. The local priest is invited, who blesses the child, soon after hair is removed and he names the child. Sometimes elder members in the family circle are asked to name the baby. Ear-boring is done by the local goldsmith in front of the shrine and the goldsmith is paid in terms of *Dhatchina* or token money and also some grains. The custom of boring the right nostril of the child, if it is third one, where first born and second died, is common. The child is very often named after his grandfather or family deity. Female child is named after the ancestors or village goddesses or evil spirits. Childless parents, to whom any child is born after the fulfilment of any vow name it after the particular god or goddess. The most common names among caste Hindus are Muthu, Velu, Sathivel, Ayyanar, Sathiah, Muniyandi, Kalimuthu etc., for boys and Muniyammal, Mariammal, Kaliammal, Veeramakali, Ponnathal, Oyyammal etc., are the common names among girls. Among Pallans, Parayans etc., names such as Sathan, Chadayan, Odayan, Muthan, Vemban, Karuppan, Muthu, Kalimuthu, and Pichai are commonly found for boys and Arayee, Alagammal, Odayammal, Elavakkal, Silambayee, Kali, Mari, Sikappee, Karuppayee etc. are common among female children. There is a common belief among Hindu castes that if a child is born with 'Malai' or tie around the neck, then some harm will befall the maternal uncle of the infant. To ward off the evil effects, they perform poojas to the local god or goddess offering fowl or goat.

46. Among Catholics, a child soon after the birth, gets baptism in the church. The Catholic priest christens the infant in the church where prayers are conducted. The priest blesses the child and sprinkles water on its head. A token sum is paid to the church as fee for the baptism ceremony. Pallan or Parayan converts do not generally have this ceremony in a big scale; only rich Udayar Catholics celebrate the baptism in a grand manner. After the baptism ceremony is held in the church, they collect in the house to perform an informal ceremony. The guests are treated with a feast and betel leaves. The practice of presenting money, *Moi* as they call it in Tamil, by the close relatives is commonly found among Christians also just like Hindus. Among Muslims, it is the common belief that the name of Allah should be the first sound the child should hear and as soon as possible after the birth of an infant, the maternal uncle or father repeats the Musalman's call to prayer. Muslims also observe the pollution period just as Hindus do; a lying-in woman is regarded as impure and she is not permitted to touch 'Koran' for 12 days. The child and mother are washed in water in which neem leaves are steeped and the mother usually keeps her bed for twelve days. Afterwards the house is cleaned and white-washed. Cowdung is seldom used, nor the urine of cow is sprinkled as they are considered unclean by the Muslims. Naming ceremony is not commonly celebrated among the poor sections.

**Death customs**

47. Dead bodies are usually buried; only those committed suicide or those died of snake bite or such unnatural deaths are burnt. Only among Vellalas and Chettiyars, the burning of dead bodies is prevalent. Maravas, Konars, Agamudiyars, Asaris, Pandarams and other caste Hindus and Adi-dravidas usually bury the dead; Muslims, as a rule bury the dead bodies. Separate burial grounds are there for Shanans, Pallans, Parayans, etc., on different points beside the tank, in each hamlet. Maravars, Vellalas, Yadhavas, Chettiyars and Agamudiyars have a common burial ground. The funeral ceremonies of different castes vary somewhat in details, but the following is the procedure generally followed by most of the caste Hindus. The corpse is bathed and new clothes put on and is kept in sitting posture; a lamp is lighted and is placed on the head of the dead body. The near-relatives then pour into his mouth, a few drops of milk. When a father is dead, the eldest son, assisted by other relatives, washes the deceased's head and anoints it with oil. The corpse is then wrapped in new clothes—if a man, in a white one; if a woman in a red one, and placed on a *Padai* or bier in a half-sitting or lying

posture; betel leaves are placed sometimes in the mouth. Women mourn and cry aloud, with their hair dishevelled and beating their breasts: this being over, the body is carried to the burial ground, with the loud music of drums and blowings of *Sangu* or shell. Generally male relatives and the sons alone follow the corpse, women remaining in the house. Among Vellalas, Maravars and Agamudiyars, clothes are placed on the ground over which the funeral procession passes, the cloth being picked up and placed in front again. In the burial ground, the eldest son or whoever does the *Karuma* to the deceased takes bath; the dead body is buried in a pit and covered by mud and cowdung. Stones and thorny twigs are placed over it. If the corpse is to be burnt, a fire is taken by the eldest son or sometimes by a 'Thotti' or Parayan, following the dead body. The son or the person doing 'Karuma' walks three times round the pyre with a torch in his hand and a pot of water on his shoulder. After this, he applies the fire to the wood, in the direction of head if the deceased is a male, and in the direction of the feet if it is a female. He takes bath and returns home without looking behind, so that the deceased's sin may not fall on his head. The duties for burial or burning are attended by Adi-dravidas in the case of deaths among caste Hindus. For Muslims, only Muslim people do themselves: similarly the Pallans, Parayans and Chakkiliyans perform these duties for themselves. Death pollution lasts for twelve or sixteen days; on the last day, *Karumanthiram* ceremony is held, when cooked food is offered to the dead person and the deity is worshipped. The maternal uncle, father-in-law and brothers-in-law of the person who does 'Karuma' present him new clothes with a feast, more frequently a non-vegetarian dinner. Among Pallans, Parayans and Chakkiliyans, the funeral rites are much simple. Almost all the dead bodies are buried. The corpse is washed in front of the house and garlanded with flowers; it is then carried on a temporary litter of palm leaf mats and bamboos, wrapped in a new coarse cloth. A ditch is dug in the burial ground and the dead body is buried inside, which is then covered by mud and cowdung. On the sixteenth day after the death, comes 'Karumathi' or expiatory ceremony when food is given to the spirit of the dead person. *Straddha* or annual ceremony to recognise the anniversary of the death of a person is seldom conducted among Adi-dravidas; it is most probably, an imitation of brahminical usages. If a first born male child dies, it is usually buried very near to the hut itself and it is not taken to the burial place so that the dead body may not be carried off by any witch to be used in magic rites, as the first born boy is believed to possess some extraordinary powers.

**Christians**

48. Among Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, dead bodies are always buried and the priest performs the ceremony. Only a few who can afford, buries the corpse placed inside a box and others simply bury the dead body without the box. Among Catholics, the corpse is first bathed in water in front of the house and then carried to the church where prayers are conducted by the priest. The church bell tolls continuously from the moment of death and this indicates the occurrence of death in a Christian household. The corpse is placed in a coffin, which is called *Asandhi* in vernacular, in lying posture, which is decorated by flowers and brought to the Catholic church. The Asandhi or the coffin is taken in a procession, usually without any music or drums; the bereaved, as well as relatives and friends follow the coffin silently. In the church, the Parish Priest conducts 'Thukkappadal' or mourning songs and prayers. This lasts for nearly 30 minutes and then the coffin is carried to the burial ground, where the priest gives some sermons and the dead body is buried in the pit under the ground. It is buried frequently without the coffin; only a few rich Udayar Catholics bury the dead body with the coffin. A fee ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 is charged by the priest of the church which goes to the church fund. Among the Pallar converts, who are poor and cannot afford to pay this fee, the dead body is not taken to the church and the priest does not perform prayers either in the church or in the burial ground. Parayans take the dead body to the little thatched church in the cheri and prayers are conducted by an elderly person among them; then the dead body is buried in the burial ground which is separate for the converts from low castes like Parayans and Pallans. The main burial ground is exclusively meant for those Christians belonging to Udayar caste. As among the Hindus, the duties like digging the pit and burying are attended to by Christian converts of Pallans or Parayans, for the deaths among Udayars. The death ceremony of Protestant Christians is similar in all respects, except that the church levies no fee like Catholics and dead body is buried frequently with the coffin itself.

**Muslims**

49. Muslims have got a separate place for burying the dead bodies; the corpse is washed by water and taken in a procession placed inside a box to the mosque, where the religious priest recites passages from the sacred Koran. Then the dead body is carried to the burial ground; the bereaved and the relatives follow the corpse with absolute silence. No musical instruments or shells are dinned along the procession. The dead body is buried in the pit dug for the purpose, a handful of mud is thrown by the son or the near-relatives of the deceased, followed by others. These duties are attended by Muslims themselves. Muslims do not generally spend much on death ceremonies, as caste Hindus very often do.

**Health and sanitation**

50. Inadequate and unprotected water supply, dirty streets, unclean banks of the ponds, cow dung heaps close to the dwellings are the sad features of village sanitation in Visavanoor. Visavanoor presents a picture of unenlightened and poverty-stricken village with unsatisfactory sanitary and hygienic conditions. A village of its size needs proper arrangements for cleaning the streets, for removal of human waste etc. The water in the open pond or *Oorani* is not free from contamination. No organised effort seems to be made to keep the village clean. The Village Panchayat is also not concerned with these poor sanitary conditions. There are no drainage, either open or closed; waste water from the houses stagnates around them, causing the mosquito menace, besides bad odour. The streets are narrow generally in all hamlets barring some hamlets where Christians are predominant; the lanes and by-lanes are full of dirt and filth. Cow dung is gathered by people and stored in different places in the lanes. There are no latrines in Visavanoor; open fields, banks of irrigation tanks, Ooranis are the places for people to answer their calls of nature. Small children use the lanes or backyards of the houses mostly. Bathing also poses a severe problem. There is no well in the village; neither the village has any river or stream beside it. The ponds or irrigation tanks are the only places where the villagers take bath. Even the bulls are bathed in the same pond along with men. Clothes are washed and all sorts of dirty things are cleaned in the pond. Each hamlet has one Oorani or pond for bathing purposes, apart from the drinking-water-Oorani. In short, the general sanitary and hygienic conditions are thoroughly poor for which ignorance, illiteracy and poverty of the people are also mainly responsible. Dirty streets, insanitary surroundings, dirty tanks near the residential settlements and unprotected water supply are the distressing features of sanitation. Dirty water stagnant in and around dwellings, filthy lanes and by-lanes are the common scenes in Harijan cheris. No organised effort was taken to keep the village clean and the Village Panchayat formed recently is not worried by the alarming situation of bad sanitation and inadequate water supply.

**Medical assistance**

51. In general villages lack medical facilities and the presence of a qualified doctor is a rare phenomenon. But fortunate are the people of Visavanoor in having a good dispensary. The dispensary is located in Kannappan Kudiyiruppu, the southern-most hamlet and it was founded by the American Mission and it is run by Church of South India. It was started in the early twenties with one American doctor. Now there are two doctors, one of them is American. The dispensary is well kept and one leprosy ward is maintained and T. B. wards have also been opened in the recent past. This hospital serves well in this village and also for villages within a radius of ten or fifteen miles all around. But it must be admitted that this is not a free hospital and most of the poor folk in Visavanoor cannot afford to pay the dispensary even the minimum charges. Delivery takes place usually at home and the barber's wife is the attendant in most cases. Only in 199 households, confinement took place in hospital and six cases were treated in home by bringing doctor, as may be seen from Table No. IV. In 36 families, the qualified midwife in dispensary attended delivery; the poor and middle class people normally employ the barber's wife or the elderly women of the caste. Table No. IV indicates the medical system followed by the different communities of village. The presence of dispensary is the boon to the villagers and 353 households receive allopathic treatment; villagers normally prefer native medicines and in cases of emergency they go in for hospital treatment, thus we see 236 households taking medical treatment under more than one system. The poor folk cannot afford to pay to the dispensary and they scarcely receive allopathic treatment and 53 households are satisfied with native medicines.

TABLE No. IV

**Medical Care**

| Community | Number of maternity cases confined: In hospital | By bringing Doctor home | By qualified Midwife at home | By unqualified Thai at home | Without assistance at home | Ordinary medical treatment: Allopathic | Ayurvedic | Homeopathic | Combination of more than one system | Native medicine |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| Idayar | 67 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | 62 | ... | ... | 70 | 19 |
| Maravar | 22 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 29 | ... | ... | 15 | ... |
| Parayar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 23 | ... | ... | 5 | 4 |
| Vellala | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | ... | ... | 3 | 4 |
| Pallar | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 5 | 4 |
| Chettiyar | 6 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| Ambattan | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 |
| Vannan | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | ... | ... | 4 | ... |
| Asari | 4 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 5 | ... | ... | 4 | 1 |
| Chakkiliyan | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 7 | 1 |
| Agamudiyar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 6 | ... |
| Pandaram | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| Panicker | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Brahmin | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Nadar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| Valluvar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Veduvar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Muslim | 3 | 2 | 4 | ... | ... | 39 | ... | ... | 15 | 1 |
| Roman Catholics | 54 | ... | 7 | ... | ... | 116 | ... | ... | 93 | 16 |
| Protestants | 22 | 3 | 19 | ... | ... | 32 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| **Total** | **199** | **6** | **36** | ... | ... | **353** | ... | ... | **236** | **53** |

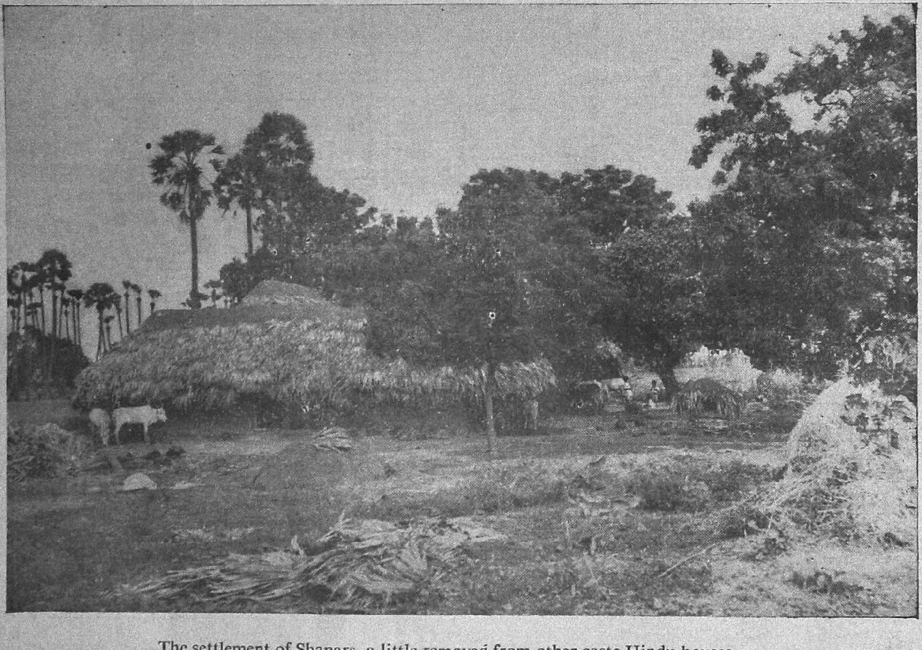
**Water supply**

52. The only source of water supply in Visavanoor is the common pond or *Oorani* as they call it; protected water supply or water from well are things quite unknown to the villagers. The tanks are rainfed and some water is also brought from the irrigation tanks nearby the village through open canals. The conditions of water-supply become more desperate during hot summer months, when the water is dried up completely and people themselves dig the earth for a few feet at several places in the pond to quench their thirst. Several attempts were made for digging wells, but the water turned always brackish; there is no hope, among the villagers, that their precarious problem of water supply can easily be solved in the near future. Each hamlet has got a drinking water Oorani in the close vicinity; on the very approach of every hamlet, is found the Oorani, and only in the hamlet of Suriyankottai, the Oorani is far off the residential area where people have to carry water for a furlong or two. Generally, the Oorani is used exclusively for drinking water purposes and another big pond serves the purpose of bathing, washing etc., and people themselves protect the tank from misuse. Thanks to the Catholic missionary in the hamlet of Kalladithidal, a well was

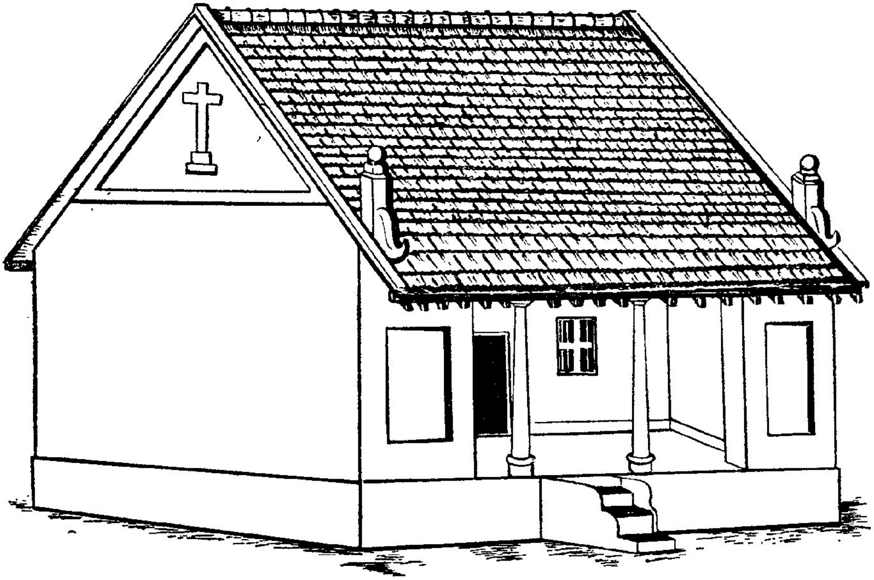
Drinking water poses a great problem in the village; people have to carry water for a furlong or two.

The only source of water supply is the common pond.

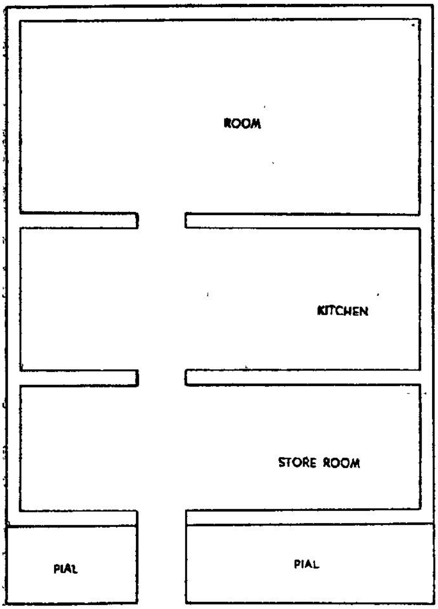
The Muslim street



The settlement of Shanars, a little removed from other caste Hindu houses.



A tiled house of an Udayar




Ground plan of an Udayar's house

dug, after a series of trials in different places around the church and this well serves a section of the people, especially the missionary authorities, and staff of the adjoining school. This well is also not in full use by the villagers here, due to a peculiar sour taste of the water. In this hamlet also, Oorani at the northern boundary of the hamlet, continues to be the main source of drinking water. Ooranis in the village are common for all the communities irrespective of their religion and caste; but it is customary that people of Adi-dravida castes both of Hindu religion and Christian converts draw water from the farther corner and all the other communities take water at another point. Shanans or Nadars are also not allowed to draw water along with the higher caste people and they have got their own 'corner'. These arrangements are of age-old practice and deviation from this does not seem to be imminent. On the whole, the village of Visavanoor suffers from an inadequate supply of drinking water, with no hope for getting somewhat protected water supply, free from contamination.

## Housing

53. The poverty of people is fully reflected on the housing conditions observed in this village.

Houses are generally small in size; the thatched house is the rule and some of the houses are tiled and one house belonging to a Vellala is the only terraced house and that too is partly tiled. Of the 649 households, 472 households live in thatched huts, 175 in tiled houses and one in terraced house. The combination of mud wall with thatch roof is most common and there are 472 such houses. The different pattern of roofs and walls of the houses is shown in Table No. V. There are 574 households

**TABLE No. V**

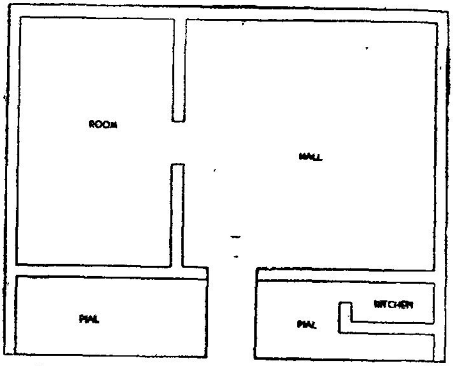
**House Types**

| Community | Total No. of houses | Number of houses with the roof made of | | | | | | Number of houses with wall built of | | | | | Number of houses with | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Terraced houses | Country Tiles | Mangalore Tiles | Concrete | Straw or grass | Coconut or palmyra leaves | Mud only | Bricks | Stones | Others | Huts without walls | Mud floor | Cement floor | Wooden floor | Other types of floor |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) |
| Idayar | 151 | ... | 39 | ... | ... | ... | 112 | 142 | 9 | ... | ... | ... | 112 | ... | ... | 39 |
| Maravar | 44 | ... | 12 | ... | ... | ... | 32 | 41 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | 32 | .. | ... | 12 |
| Parayar | 32 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 32 | 32 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 32 | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 13 | 14 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 13 | ... | ... | 2 |
| Pallan | 12 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 11 | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 11 | ... | ... | 1 |
| Chettiyar | 12 | ... | 4 | ... | 1 | ... | 7 | 11 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 7 | 1 | ... | 4 |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | 9 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 3 | 9 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | ... | ... | 9 |
| Vannan | 12 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 11 | 11 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 11 | ... | ... | 1 |
| Asari | 10 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 8 | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | ... | ... | 2 |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 | ... | ... | 1 |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | .. | ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | .. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Muslim | 55 | ... | 41 | ... | ... | ... | 14 | 28 | 27 | ... | ... | ... | 14 | ... | ... | 41 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | ... | 47 | ... | ... | ... | 179 | 207 | 19 | ... | ... | ... | 179 | ... | ... | 47 |
| Protestants | 37 | ... | 11 | ... | ... | ... | 26 | 32 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | 26 | ... | ... | 11 |
| **Total** | **649** | **1** | **175** | ... | **1** | ... | **472** | **574** | **75** | ... | ... | ... | **472** | **1** | .. | **176** |

or 88.4 per cent living in mud houses and the brick houses account for the rest viz., 11.6 per cent, most of them belonging to Muslim and well-to-do Catholic Udayars, Maravars, Barbers etc. Not even a single stone wall is found; stone is scarce in this barren region. The brick houses are mostly tiled and the bricks are generally sun-baked and not burnt bricks. The houses are, as a rule tiny and only a small number of houses are big in size. The villagers seem to believe in the Tamil poetess Auvaiyar's saying 'Build small and prosper greatly' (சிறுகக் கட்டி பெருக வாழ்க). The houses of Maravars, Vellalas, Chettiyars are well arranged on either side of the street; in the cheri or settlement of Harijans, the huts are much clustered and the cheri is situated a little farther from the hamlet site where caste Hindus live in. The typical house of a caste Hindu is just this: There are two pials—outer pials facing the street, one on each side of the entrance and an open space known as *Koodam* is there behind which a hall or on the sides and the kitchen

and a small store room is found in corner. The hall is used for dining and sleeping purposes. Visitors are received in the verandah or in the Koodam. No kitchen garden is seen in any of the houses.

54. The Muslims' dwellings are mostly tiled; the economic prosperity is demonstrated by these houses. The outer walls of their houses are decorated with designs of flowers and beautiful figures. Passages from the sacred Koran are seen at the main entrance under glass frame. Apart from these things there are no distinct frontage in the houses of Muslims. Pials are also built in their houses and even inside the dwellings; the Muslim houses are much the same as Hindu dwellings. The houses of big cultivators, are generally speaking, filled by agricultural implements like plough, 'Manvetti' or spade etc., and rice bags and Kudiru or a kind of storage vessel containing grains, one or two cots with a heap of all the beddings of the family—pillows, mats, bed sheets, blankets etc., and all the clean dresses for the use of both men and women. The first comment that springs to the lips of an observer is that a cultivator's home seems rather a store and a place to sleep in, than a place to live in. If there are chairs or stools, they are usually kept in the verandah or courtyard of the house. Houses of the less prosperous landholders and landless labourers are




*Ground plan of a hut*

mostly thatched with palmyra or coconut leaves and tiled houses are few and far between. The floor is made of earth, of course, covered by cowdung sprinkled periodically. Very often cattle shed is attached to the house itself; the huts vary in size according to the prosperity of the family, apart from the family size. No regular room is there inside the hut; the same hut is used as the kitchen, the dining room, store-room, sleeping apartment, and everything.

**A low mud-walled thatched hut**

In the poorer homesteads, the most obvious signs of poverty will be holes in the walls of the huts, absence of any door or door-step, low roof etc. The huts are mostly small in size, with less than 200 square feet in floor area.

**Rooms**

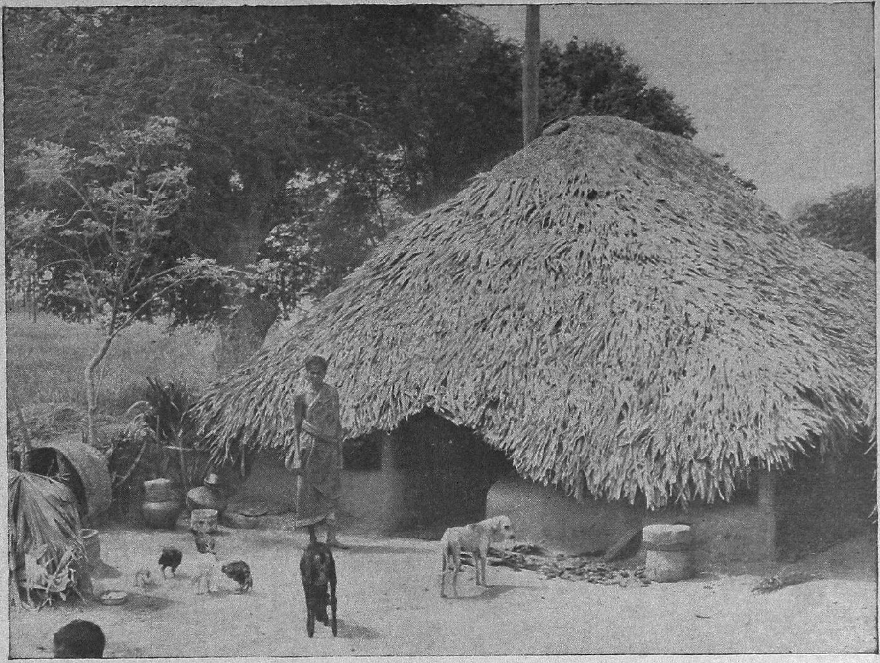
55. As most of the dwellings in Visavanoor are thatched huts of small size, only one room is found in a vast majority of the houses. Only well-to-do people's tiled houses are having two or three rooms, rooms being used mostly for storage purposes. Separate drawing rooms, dining rooms are not there in any of the houses in Visavanoor. The houses are classified in Table No. VI below, according to the number of rooms and persons occupied by each community. The inadequacy of rooms is well exhibited by the figures shown in the Table.

TABLE No. VI

**Households by number of rooms and by number of persons**

| Community | Total number of house-holds | Total number of rooms | Total number of family members | Households with no regular room | | Households with one room | | Households with two rooms | | Households with three rooms | | Households with four and more rooms | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Households | Members | Households | Members | Households | Members | Households | Members | Households | Members |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) |
| Idayar | 151 | 164 | 708 | ... | ... | 138 | 622 | 13 | 86 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 44 | 47 | 191 | ... | ... | 41 | 177 | 3 | 14 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Parayar | 32 | 32 | 167 | ... | ... | 32 | 167 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | 16 | 61 | ... | ... | 14 | 54 | 1 | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallar | 12 | 14 | 54 | ... | ... | 10 | 44 | 2 | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 14 | 55 | ... | ... | 10 | 43 | 2 | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | 17 | 66 | ... | ... | 7 | 36 | 5 | 30 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | 12 | 40 | ... | ... | 12 | 40 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Asari | 10 | 10 | 61 | ... | ... | 10 | 61 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | 10 | 57 | ... | ... | 10 | 57 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 7 | 35 | ... | ... | 7 | 35 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | 4 | 23 | ... | ... | 4 | 23 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | 4 | 12 | ... | ... | 4 | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | 2 | 8 | ... | ... | 2 | 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | 1 | 4 | ... | ... | 1 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 55* | 72 | 249 | 2 | 3 | 36 | 152 | 15 | 83 | 2 | 11 | ... | ... |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 243 | 1,160 | ... | ... | 211 | 1047 | 14 | 109 | ... | ... | 1 | 4 |
| Protestants | 37 | 41 | 136 | ... | ... | 33 | 118 | 4 | 18 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Total | 649 | 713 | 3,091 | 2 | 3 | 585 | 2,704 | 59 | 369 | 2 | 11 | 1 | 4 |

* Houseless persons (2)



A thatched hut of a Pallar household

A small girl of 8 or 10 years wears *sithadai* or a small saree of 4 yards in length.

Only 59 households are having two-roomed houses; with the poverty of the masses, the possibility of building big houses with more rooms is rather not a feasible phenomenon. The size of the houses can well be imagined from the details of ground area covered by them. The following table classifies the dwellings according to the different scales of plinth area.

| Plinth area (Sq. feet) | No. of houses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0-100 | 51 | 7.9 |
| 101-200 | 239 | 36.8 |
| 201-300 | 186 | 28.7 |
| 301-400 | 95 | 14.6 |
| 401-500 | 32 | 4.9 |
| 501-600 | 12 | 1.9 |
| 601-700 | 10 | 1.5 |
| 701-800 | 7 | 1.1 |
| 801 & above | 17 | 2.6 |
| **Total** | **649** | **100.0** |

The houses are medium sized; the average floor area per house works out to 260 sq. feet. There are 51 houses or 7.9 per cent, having ground area of 100 sq. feet or less. Big houses with plinth area exceeding 500 square feet account for only 7.1 per cent. Maximum number of houses are grouped under the range 101—300 square feet i. e. 65.5 per cent of the houses. The building materials are mainly locally available. Most of the dwellings being thatched huts, straw of paddy, and millets are mostly used for thatching. Bricks are not available in and around Visavanoor and as they have to be brought from distant places, the cost of transportation becomes high. Mangalore tiles are bought from nearby towns such as Paramakudi or Ramanathapuram and brought here by bullock-carts. Mostly sun-baked bricks are used and burnt bricks are found here and there only in well-to-do people's houses. Brick-kiln is not found in the close vicinity.

**Furniture**

56. Furniture is a rare thing to be seen in the houses and in many a house, one can find only a cot, the only item of furniture in use; there is no chair, table, sofa, bedstead or cupboard and the houses look absolutely bare, except a few mats and pillows heaped in a corner. The absence of furniture is perhaps more a question of taste than of anything else, although economic prosperity has some influence. Even the wealthiest man of the village has as little furniture as a member of poorest labour classes. Only some educated people, teachers and some Christians use furniture. Cots are found in several households and stool is the item of furniture coming next in importance. Almirahs, cupboards are rarely to be found even in the houses of wealthy landholders. *Mukkali* or a small stool with three legs is commonly found in kitchens and long benches are not uncommon in the houses of well-to-do people. The figures given in Table No. VII reveal how far various items of furniture and consumer goods are in use in the homes of Visavanoor. It is clearly seen that by far, cot is the most common furniture in Visavanoor, being used by 16.5 per cent of households. Stools and bench come next in importance; roughly seven per cent of the families are using them. Chairs are found only in 45 households, mostly Muslims and Christians, out of 649 households. The villagers, generally do not prefer to sit on a chair and instead they squat on the floor. They seldom use dining tables and they always eat off the ground from a mat or a 'Manai' (wooden plank) and squatting on their haunches. If they are tired and require rest, very often they squat on the floor, even there may be any stool or chair in the house. However, for beds, there is not the same objection and cot is preferred to lying on the floor. In truth, the absence of furniture is not a question of money, but a question of taste.

**Dress**

57. The clothing and ornaments vary from religion to religion; especially the attire of Hindu men and women are simple, while Muslims wear a different type of dress and ornaments. Hindu men, generally, wear dhoti and a towel; baniyans or shirts are worn only by youngsters. The length of the dhoti is either two yards or four yards, which consists of a single piece of cloth and it is wound round the waist and it falls just below the knees and it is fastened by simply folding one part within the other. The upper cloth or towel is thrown over the shoulders and elders invariably have the towels of two yards or a little more. Only educated younger folk and school-going boys wear made-up tunics like trousers and shirts. Turban is seldom worn by Hindus. Muslims wear lunghis and baniyans and usually a cap is worn on the head by most of them. Shirts are more common among Muslims than Hindus. Wearing of chappals is rare and only on visiting to other villages or towns, people wear chappals. Among the persons returning from

TABLE No. VII

**Furniture and consumer goods acquired in the last five years**

| Community | Number of households which have acquired furniture in last five years | | | | | | Number of households which have acquired consumer goods in the last five years | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stool | Bench | Chair | Cot | Table | Almirah | Lantern | Torch light | Petromax | Radio | Cycle | Gramaphone | Stove |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) |
| Idayar | 3 | 3 | 2 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 151 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | ... | 1 | 44 | 5 | 2 | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Parayar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 32 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 5 | 1 | ... | 2 | ... | 1 |
| Pallar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 6 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Vannan | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Asari | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 16 | 9 | 12 | 38 | 1 | 3 | 55 | 40 | 17 | ... | 2 | ... | ... |
| Roman Catholics | 6 | 7 | 10 | 20 | 2 | 4 | 226 | 17 | 4 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... |
| Protestants | 9 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 37 | 12 | 1 | ... | 3 | ... | ... |
| **Total** | **46** | **45** | **45** | **107** | **14** | **17** | **649** | **96** | **29** | **4** | **13** | **1** | **1** |

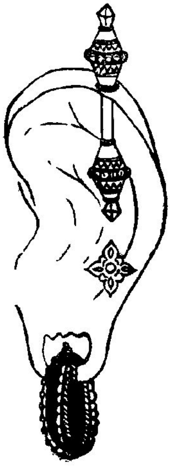
far eastern countries for their short stay in the village, it is customary to wear chappals bought from foreign countries; they present these chappals to their friends and relatives or they sell a few of these chappals sometimes to the other villagers and hence the fashion of wearing such chappals is gaining ground among the younger folk. The usual form of dress of Hindu woman is the coloured saree with a bodice ; a saree consists of one piece of long cloth, from six to nine yards in length and about 1½ yards in width and one end the saree is gathered in folds and held to the left side while the other end is wound round the waist and brought up over the right shoulder and down to the left side, where it is tucked in so as to fall down the front in folds. They wear handloom sarees which are mostly red or blue in colour. Old and middle-aged

women seldom wear any jacket or bodice; especially women of low castes wear only sarees, without any type of bodice. Petticoats are not common, even small girls of eight or ten years of age wear what is called *Sithadai* or small saree of four yards in length; school going girls go in for petticoats. Muslim women have got their own pattern of dress; only a few wear sarees and the normal attire of a Muslim woman is a lunghi full of beautiful designs of flowers, plants etc., a loose jacket with full arm and an upper cloth of two to three yards thrown over the shoulders from the waist, which will also serve to cover the head and a part of the face. Lunghis are brought from the far-eastern countries, by the persons who come to the village periodically and women prefer these foreign-made lunghis to local ones, as the former are full of lively designs with bright colours besides their durability. Only a few Muslim girls now-a-days wear sarees like Hindu girls young girls wear petticoats with tight-fitting bodice and they never go in for *Sithadai.* The pattern of dress of Christians generally resembles that of Hindus, except the type of ornaments. Among Christians, a few educated men, mostly teachers, wear pants and shirts and wearing of chappals is more common among them than the Hindus.

**Ornaments**

58. Among Hindu women, ear-rings and nose-rings are very common and even poor women wear some sort of ornament, either gold, silver or some beads Women of wealthy families have all types of ornaments; ears are fully decked with multifarious type of ear-ring, and apart from nose-rings and finger-rings, they wear necklace or chain of gold or *Pathakkam*, a necklet interspersed with red beads hanging close to the neck; bangles of gold adorn the arms and *Minji* or toe-ring is worn by many. There are several designs of ear-rings; the famous *Thandatti,* an antiquated heavy ear-ornament is worn by middle-aged women who stretch the lobes of their ears and this is most common among Maravars, Konars and Adi-dravidas. Young girls now-a-days, wear 'Kammal' or *Thodu* (small sized ear-rings) instead of 'Thandatti'. *Koppu, Onnappu Thattu* and *Kuruttu Thattu* are the small ear-rings at different points in the ear and these are slowly losing ground. *Mookuthis* or nose-rings are worn by old as well as young and you cannot see any Hindu girl, without these nose-rings. It is also common among Hindu women to wear silver or gold *Thayathus* in the form of small cylinders, along with the neck-chain and children as well as grown-ups wear Thayathus which are supposed to protect the wearer

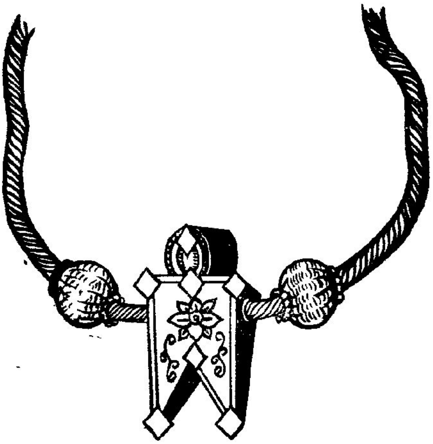
Kathuvali, a set of twelve ear rings, worn by muslim women



Koppu and Onnappu (ear rings)

Thali of Idayars

from the baneful influence of evil eye or any harm. Bangles either of gold or brass or glass are very common among rich as well as poor. Small girls of age below five years wear *arei-moodi* or a leaf-shaped silver plate, which is tied round the waist. Kappu, a heavy bangle is worn by middle-aged women. In general, among all types of ornaments younger generation prefers and uses lighter type of ornaments while middle aged and old persons only wear heavy ornaments like Thandatti, Kappu etc. The ornaments of Muslim women vastly differ from the ornaments of Hindus. *Kathuvali*, a set of twelve small ear-rings' covers the greater part of ear and in addition to this, *Alamurugus*, *Mattils*, *Lolaks* or oscillating ear-rings are worn in the ear and the ear of a Muslim girl is scarcely visible, when all the ear-ornaments are worn.



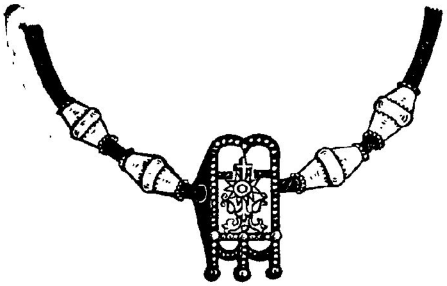
Thali of Hindus

Another type of Thali

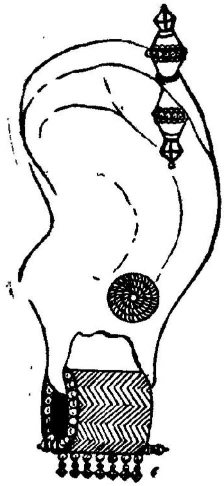
A neck ornament

'Kathuvali', a set of twelve small ear-rings

An Idayar woman. Thandatti, Koppu, Onnappu Thattu and Kuruttu Thattu are the ear ornaments worn by her.



Karai, a necklet worn by Catholic Udayars



Poochi Koodu, an ear ornament

'Uthiriam '—A scapular or holy badge worn by Catholics

These ear-rings are not, however, common among young women, who tend to wear jewels of Hindus like Kammal, Thodu, neck chain, necklace etc. Kathuvali becomes out of fashion now-a-days and only aged women stick to it. Muslim girls wear 'Thali' or emblem of marriage along with neck chain just like Hindu women.

59. Christian women wear simple ornaments; but some Catholic Udayars use some peculiar heavy ear-ornament known as *Poochi-Koodu*, a cylinderical hollow ornament. Middle-aged and elderly women among Udayars wear peculiar neck ornaments known as 'Attiyal', a tight-fitting necklet and *Karai*, a loose neck-wire falling sufficiently below the neck. Dollars showing holy cross are mostly attached to neck-chains; the Thali is also somewhat different from the Thali of Hindus; the inscription of the holy cross makes the difference. Younger women and school going girls of Udayar community never go in for antiquated ornaments like Poochikoodu, Attiyal and Karai and modern Kammals, neck-chains and necklaces replace the old ones. Silver 'Kappu', a heavy wristlet is more common among them. Silver 'Thandai' is the favourite anklet of the Udayar girls. Nose-rings of Christians are of the same pattern as worn by Hindus; young children of both sexes among them, wear 'Uthiriyam' or scapular around the neck, after being blessed by the priest; this scapular is peculiar to Catholics showing their special devotion to St. Mary and Protestant Christians seldom wear this. Gold chains with holy cross designs are common among young boys as well as grown-ups among Catholics. Most of the Udayars wear badges around the neck, apart from the scapular.

**Tatooing**

60. Tatooing was once commonly practised on women and children of both sexes; grown up men rarely have their hands tatooed. However, this has gone out of fashion; women of Pallans, Parayans and Chakkiliyans, are more fond of tattooing; they have their arms elaborately tatooed with ornamental designs of beautiful flowers and figures. Men tatoo the inner side of their arms with their names inscribed; among Christians, Parayas have a fascination towards tatooing and the device is very often a cross! With children, it is confined to a simple line drawn down from the forehead. Tatooing is not common among Protestant Christians. Most of the men, now-a-days, have their hair cropped and only a few Chettiars and Brahmins have Kudumi or tuft on the head. Muslims have completely shaven heads with beard, while the Hindus wear only the moustache on the face but seldom or never wear a beard. Among Hindus, wearing of a beard very often indicates some vows. Men wear Kadukkans or ear-rings made of gold with some beads or pearls, but this is the fashion among the wealthier section of the community. Thayathu or the charm is also worn by many; of course, some religious sentiments are attached to it. Use of cosmetics and toilet is quite restricted to girls of younger generation, some educated women and teachers and a vast majority of women folk are not at all aware of modern cosmetics. Most of the Hindu women, after their bath, smear their faces and feet with a solution of turmeric, which is supposed to make them fair. Toilet soap is not used nor they apply snow or Talcum powder after their bath. The finger nails are reddened with a dye of Maruthani leaves, a kind of tree. Women usually have the feet uncovered. They, of course, pay sufficient attention to hair-dressing, but, of course, women of low castes do not do hair-dressing frequently. Women generally tie up their long black glossy hair in a knot at the back of the head, which is called *Kondai*. This is not, however, in vogue among young girls and school going children; they generally plait their hair in tails or *Jadai* hanging down behind, scarcely with any ribbons at the end. Only a handful of girls of wealthy families use ribbons and jadai-billais; beautiful flowers of sweet fragrance are tastefully placed in the hair which have a very pleasing effect, but as flowers have to come from distant places and the village has got no flower gardens, not all wear flowers and only a few can afford to buy flowers for cash; on festival days and important occasions, flowers are common.

**Diet**

61. The ancillary information gathered at the time of Socio-economic enquiry throw some light on the food and food habits of people. Basically, there is a prevalence of cereal-dominated and highly monotonous food, and the virtual absence of protective foods like milk, egg, etc. Rice is the chief diet among all classes of people, the exception being the poorer section of landless labourers who take millets all the days and consume rice only on harvest seasons or some festival days. The common diet of rich people consists of rice, dhall, a curry of some vegetables, rasam, or pepper water, butter milk and

Poochi-koodu, a cylindrical hollow ornament is common among Catholic Udayar women. Koppu is seen on the upper part of the ear.

Household utensils

occasionally with ghee or gingelly oil. In the case of non-vegetarians, mutton is the favourite dish, in the place of dhall and vegetables, the other items of food remain the same. Normally, boiled rice or 'Pulungal' as is commonly called, is taken by almost all the villagers except two Brahmin families; paddy is boiled before it is husked instead of being pounded in its raw state. The boiled paddy is dried in a rice-mill in Alavidangan, a nearby village. It is said that rice so treated is more digestible and palatable as a cold food than rice treated in the ordinary way.

**Protective foods**

62. The common diet of an agricultural labourer or any poor peasant is only a pot of *Kanji* or gruel with a raw onion or green chilly and nothing more and nothing short of it. Cumbu, Varagu and Vali, are the chief millet grains taken by them and they are boiled in water and the food such prepared, Kanji as they call it, is mixed with water or sometimes with butter-milk, if it is available and is taken by all with no vegetables or any supplement items of food. Very few families consume vegetables and whatever they eat in the name of vegetables are mostly some roots available cheap in the region. Only on rare occasions, when a relative arrives at their homes as a guest, or at the time of harvest, or pongal, rice is served with fish or mutton. Non-vegetarians predominate in this village and only two Brahmin families and four Pillais are vegetarians by birth and tradition and all the other communities including Christians and Muslims take non-vegetarian food. Fish is sold by street vendors and it is always available here, as the sea-coast is not far off. Mutton is taken, generally once or twice in a month by most of the rich landholders and labourers take mutton or fish very rarely. The following table shows the number of households reported to be in practice of taking such protective foods.

| Item of food | No. of households in the habit of consuming food | Percentage to total households |
|---|---|---|
| Milk | 88 | 13.6 |
| Egg | 275 | 42.2 |
| Fish | 613 | 94.5 |
| Meat | 644 | 99.2 |

The low consumption of protective foods viz., milk and egg is clearly seen from the figures shown above. Only 13.6 per cent of households take milk as one of their normal items of food; milk is yet to impress the villager,in general, as an indispensable item of his family dietary. Even some families that own milch cattle consume less milk, as a larger part is sold out to the newly started tea-stalls. As people are predominantly non-vegetarians, 99. 2 per cent of households are reported to be in the habit of taking meat; the frequency of consumption of course varies according to their economic levels. Similarly fish is consumed by 94.5 per cent of the total households in the village. As cheap fish is readily available here because of proximity to sea-shore, even the poorer sections especially Harijans take fish frequently, but the fish consumed is of a quality fit for being used as manure. Mutton is available in the village itself; a Muslim who purchases goats or sheep, sells the mutton to different hamlets, but as it is costly, most of the villagers cannot afford to consume it, except on festival days and religious ceremonies. Muslims, however, are in the habit of taking mutton more frequently. Intake of egg is also low; only those keeping poultry in their houses can take eggs and nobody cares to buy eggs from outside, barring the school teachers and staff in the hospital.

63. Consumption of ghee, butter, curd etc., is less prevalent among the people of all sections and the use of vanaspathi or hydrogenated oil is quite unknown to the villagers. The following figures reveal the extent of use of different oils for cooking purposes.

| Type of oil | No. of house-holds | Percentage to total households |
|---|---|---|
| Gingelly oil | 2 | 0.3 |
| Groundnut oil | 581 | 89.5 |
| Coconut oil | Nil | ... |
| Combination of more than one oil | 63 | 9.7 |
| Using no oil | 3 | 0.5 |

The above figures indicate the high predominance of groundnut oil, which again shows the extreme poverty of the masses. Consumption of sugar is not common and palm jaggery is taken in most of the households. Sugar is used by some rich families and also by educated few. Sweetmeats, as an item of daily diet is totally unknown among all communities; only on festival days, people prepare sweetmeats of their choice in their homes.

**Frequency of meals**

64. Rich as well as middle class people normally take rice meal on all times in a day, without tiffin or coffee. between any meals. However, drinking tea or coffee is gaining ground even among the poorer class now-a-days and new tea-stalls have sprung up recently. All sections of people frequent tea-shops and they do not choose to prepare coffee in every home yet. Drinking Pathaneer (Neera) or palmyra juice is quite common among the people and this is available only in some seasons. Panakam or the jaggery water with tamarind is also a common drink. Not all families can afford to take three meals in a day; due to poverty nearly 40 per cent of households have only two meals in a day, in the normal days of the year and only in harvest occasions, they have sufficient food to consume. The figures given below indicate the number of meals taken by the people.

| Community | Total households | No. of households having | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | One meal a day | Two meals a day | Three meals a day | More than three meals a day |
| Christians | 263 | ... | 114 | 149 | ... |
| Muslims | 55 | ... | 11 | 44 | ... |
| Caste Hindus | 271 | 1 | 94 | 176 | ... |
| Scheduled Castes | 60 | ... | 44 | 16 | ... |
| **Total** | **649** | **1** | **263** | **385** | ... |

It is clearly seen that 40. 5 per cent of households are able to secure only two meals per day for their family members and 59.3 per cent of families have three meals a day. Among the Harijans, the proportion of households having two meals in a day is larger than the households which are able to secure three meals. The frequency of meals in respect of different castes and communities are shown in Table No. VIII.

65. As mentioned earlier, the food in every household is cereal-dominated; besides rice, varagu, vali, and cumbu are taken by most of the households. Even wealthier sections of the society take millet grains along with rice and Brahmin families are not used to it. The following table shows the intake of rice and other millet grains.

| Community | Total number of households | Households taking | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rice | Millet grains or rice with millets |
| Christians | 263 | 261 | 255 |
| Muslims | 55 | 54 | 48 |
| Caste Hindus | 271 | 270 | 256 |
| Scheduled Castes | 60 | 58 | 58 |

People, in general, do not observe any fixed timings to take food and very often, morning meal and night meal are taken early by labouring class. Taking of noon-meal always depends on the work and circumstances of the labourers. Only a few teachers, hospital staff and traders stick to time schedules for taking their meal. The villagers do not take food with all family members together; very often the head of the household and other earning members have their meal alone and the school going boys and girls and infants take food at different periods. They have no fixed hours when meals are to be taken by all in common but each one eats when he or she feels inclined. Only among Muslims, common dining is found. They use eating vessels in common, while Hindus use only separate plates. Even among Muslims, they have common dining in a single plate only on festive

TABLE No. VIII

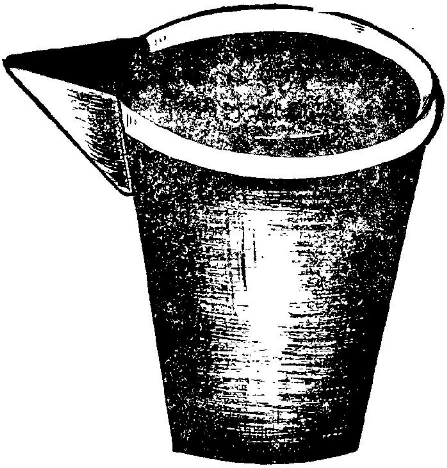
**Diet and food habits**

| Community | Total number of households | Number of vegetarian households | Number of non-vegetarian households | Number of households taking: Rice | Wheat | Grains other than rice or wheat | Roots including tapioca | Number of households taking: One meal a day | Two meals a day | Three meals a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| Idayar | 151 | ... | 151 | 148 | ... | 140 | ... | ... | 53 | 98 |
| Maravar | 44 | ... | 44 | 44 | ... | 43 | ... | ... | 14 | 30 |
| Parayar | 32 | ... | 32 | 32 | ... | 32 | ... | ... | 28 | 4 |
| Vellala | 15 | 4 | 11 | 14 | ... | 14 | ... | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| Pallar | 12 | ... | 12 | 12 | ... | 12 | ... | ... | 3 | 9 |
| Chettiyar | 12 | ... | 12 | 12 | ... | 11 | ... | ... | 4 | 8 |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | 12 | 12 | ... | 11 | ... | ... | 2 | 10 |
| Vannan | 12 | ... | 12 | 12 | ... | 10 | ... | ... | 6 | 6 |
| Asari | 10 | ... | 10 | 9 | ... | 10 | ... | ... | 5 | 5 |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | 10 | 10 | ... | 10 | ... | ... | 8 | 2 |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | 7 | 7 | ... | 6 | ... | ... | 6 | 1 |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | 4 | 4 | ... | 4 | ... | ... | 1 | 3 |
| Panicker | 4 | ... | 4 | 4 | ... | 4 | ... | ... | 3 | 1 |
| Brahmin | 2 | 2 | ... | 2 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Muslim | 55 | ... | 55 | 55 | ... | 50 | ... | ... | 11 | 44 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | ... | 226 | 226 | ... | 215 | ... | ... | 98 | 128 |
| Protestants | 37 | ... | 37 | 36 | ... | 33 | ... | ... | 16 | 21 |
| **Total** | **649** | **6** | **643** | **643** | ... | **609** | ... | **1** | **263** | **385** |

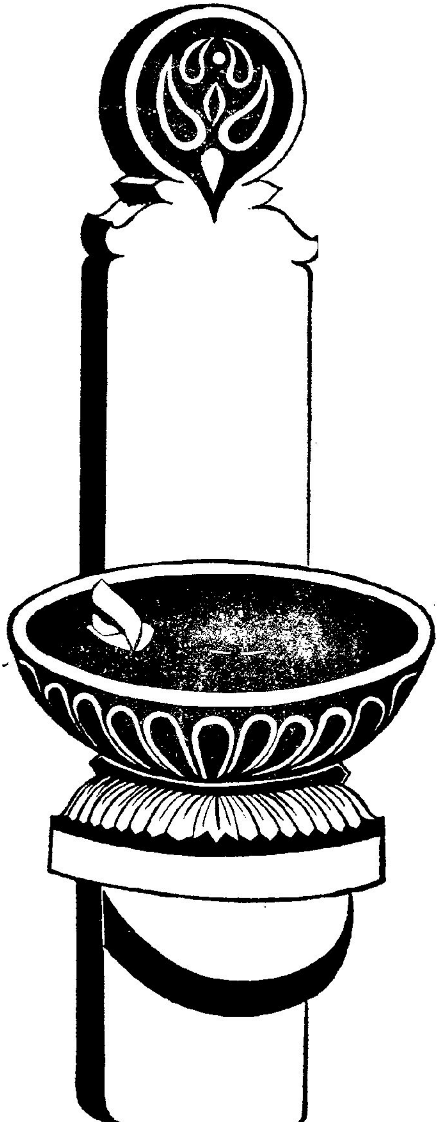
occasions. The dishes, rice, curry etc., are taken in big vessels in common and the family members sit around that vessel. Unlike in a Hindu household the housewife does not serve the dishes, but on the other hand, the participants themselves take their requirements. Very often the peasant takes his noon meal in the field, the food being taken by his wife from the home. The custom that a housewife should not partake of a meal until her husband takes food is an old custom which still prevails in orthodox circles.

**Starvation**

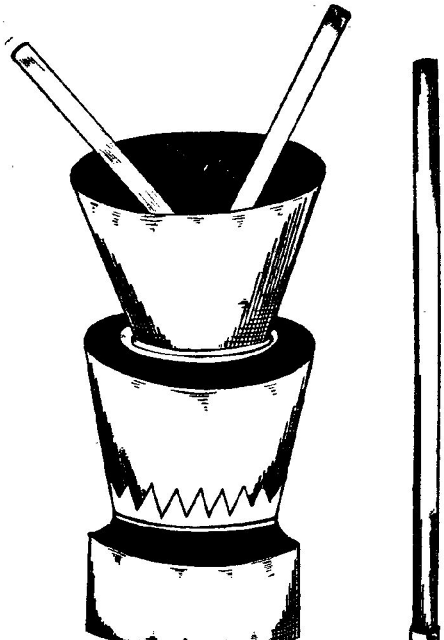
66. Cases of starvation, chronic as well as seasonal, were there among Adi-dravidas and Kuravans, who are the poorest landless labourers in the village,



Mooku Kuvalai



Viboothi Madal—a bowl containing sacred ash.



Tools for grinding grains

having no stable source of income to rely upon; in most of the off seasons they find no work and virtually they are unemployed in those seasons and only way to find food is to borrow money from the landlord. As such, it is no wonder, if a day is passed on in these households, without any food being prepared. Kuravans beg food in the houses of caste Hindus and keep themselves away from starvation. This could be taken as an obvious indication of the below-subsistence level of living.

**Utensils**

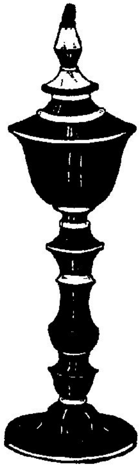
67. Food is generally cooked in earthen pots in a vast majority of households and aluminium and brass vessels are rarely found. In one Muslim household, Chinaware is used. Earthen pots are preferred to metal vessels by all sections of the village community, as they believe that food cooked in mud pots is cool unlike food cooked in copper or brass vessels. However, an increasing tendency is noticed, among wealthy people, teachers etc., to use aluminium pots and utensils.

The following table shows the extent to which earthen pots and metal vessels are in use among the villagers :—

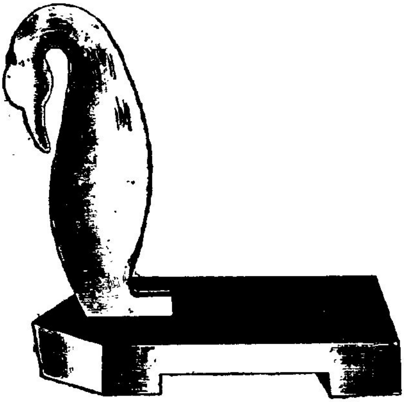
**Types of utensils**

| Community | No. of households | No. of households using utensils of Earthenware | Aluminium | Copper | Brass | Chinaware |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Idayar | 151 | 151 | 62 | 44 | 84 | ... |
| Maravar | 44 | 44 | 14 | 16 | 20 | ... |
| Parayar | 32 | 32 | 8 | 2 | 10 | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | 15 | 8 | 7 | 8 | ... |
| Pallar | 12 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 9 | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 7 | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 4 | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 5 | ... |
| Asari | 10 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 8 | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 3 | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | 4 | 2 | ... | 2 | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | 2 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 55 | 54 | 46 | 41 | 45 | 1 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 226 | 105 | 58 | 145 | ... |
| Protestants | 37 | 37 | 20 | 6 | 17 | ... |
| **Total** | **649** | **646** | **316** | **195** | **376** | **1** |

Almost all the people use mainly earthen vessels with the possible exceptions in the case of one Vannan teacher who takes meals from a hotel, one Brahmin and another Muslim household. Chinaware is found in only one Rowther family, which was said to be brought from Malaya. Brassware, copper and aluminium vessels are largely in use among the well-to-do communities such as Muslims, Catholic Udayars, Vellalas, Maravars, Chettiyars etc., while they are rarely used by Scheduled Castes and less prosperous communities. Stainless steel vessels are quite unheard of.



An antiquated kerosene lamp



Arivalmanai—Slicer in the kitchen

# CHAPTER III

## POPULATION

### Population Trend

68. Visavanoor is fairly a large village, occupying an area of 7.72 square miles with a population of 3,091 persons, as ascertained by the socio-economic survey. It consists of, besides the main village, seven hamlets dispersed all over the plain on all directions. The hamlets are comparatively smaller settlements, except Kalladithidal which is as large as the main hamlet of Visavanoor. The population of Visavanoor revenue village as per 1961 Census count was 3,022. The population figures according to the previous Censuses and variation from decade to decade are shown below :

| Year | Population | Decennial variation | Per cent variation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1911 | 2,263 | ... | ... |
| 1921 | 2,129 | -134 | -5.9 |
| 1931 | 2,402 | 273 | 12.8 |
| 1941 | 2,163 | -239 | -9.9 |
| 1951 | 1,696* | ... | ... |
| 1961 | 3,022 | ... | ... |

* Excluding two hamlets

The population trend appears irregular, showing ups and downs from decade to decade; the population as per 1951 Census was shown as 1,696, while 1961 Census population showed apparently a very large increase. However, these figures of population of 1951 and 1961 Censuses are not comparable, as the village was having an area of 3.32 square miles only in 1951 and during the intercensal period there were some territorial changes. The hamlet of Thirugukalli, formerly a part of Alavidangan revenue village and Pukkulam, a hamlet of Akkavayal were merged with Visavanoor; the present area stands at 7.72 square miles. Separate population figures for the individual hamlets in respect of 1951 Census are not forthcoming and in the absence of those details, comparison of population between 1951 and 1961 is not feasible.

### Population growth

69. The growth of population during the five decades 1911-61 works out to 759 viz., 33.54 per cent. Thus, the rate of increase is roughly 6.71 per cent for a decade which means 0.67 per cent per annum. The low growth-rate can be attributed to the large exodus of people emigrated to overseas countries like Malaya and Ceylon and the continuous movement of agricultural coolies to fertile districts like Thanjavur and Madurai. Ancillary data collected during the survey enable us to assess the extent of emigration from this village. The following statistics reveal the number of emigrants to various places inside the country and to foreign countries as ascertained from the present enquiry.

| Place or country to which migrated | Number of persons migrated | | | | Total number of persons migrated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslims | Hindus | Catholics | Protestants | |
| Malaya | 66 | 10 | ... | ... | 76 |
| Ceylon | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Places inside Madras State | 2 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 23 |
| Places outside Madras State | ... | 4 | 7 | ... | 11 |
| Other places not clearly known | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 69 | 23 | 14 | 9 | 115 |

The above figures indicate the total number of migrated people, at the time of survey and they do not include those persons who had migrated to overseas countries in the previous decades and returned later to the village. Before Second World War, the flow of migration to countries like Malaya and Ceylon was large as they had an easy opening to those countries, with good employment opportunities and better earning. It is learnt from the village headman and some elders that migration of people has considerably reduced after the Second World War

and even among the migrants in those countries, several of them have returned home for good. This is probably the effect of anti-migration policy of Ceylon, Burma, etc., and strict enforcement of immigration laws in Malaya.

**Emigration**

70. Apart from overseas migration, a large number of poor landless labourers left Visavanoor for fertile districts like Thanjavur and Madurai. The absence of fertile soil coupled with frequent droughts lead to poor yield and the agricultural wages are miserably low. With the continual rise in prices of essential commodities, landless coolies find it difficult to make both ends meet, and it is said that several persons in Visavanoor, especially from the hamlets of Pukkulam and Thirugukalli left their homes with all their families for more fertile districts in order to earn some wages to keep themselves and their children just above the level of starvation. The population data relating to these hamlets according to successive Censuses from 1911 to 1941 are furnished below:

| Year | Pukkulam | | Thirugukalli | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of occupied houses | Population | Number of occupied houses | Population |
| 1911 | 32 | 156 | 65 | 341 |
| 1921 | 30 | 157 | 49 | 320 |
| 1931 | 25 | 97 | 51 | 381 |
| 1941 | 21 | 75 | 56 | 311 |

The immigration of people from outside to this village is quite negligible. At the time of our survey, we came across 15 households consisting of 55 persons out of the total number of 649 households, who came to Visavanoor from outside, most of them being teachers, Hindu and Christian priests and hospital staff; they have no intention of settling in the village. It is therefore quite clear that migration played a significant role in the life of the villagers. The population has, of course, decreased as a result of migration.

**Distribution of castes**

71. The society of Visavanoor presents a happy picture of people of three religions living harmoniously. Among Hindus as many as 17 castes are found and among Christians, Roman Catholics predominate. Protestants form a little over 10 per cent of the total Christian population. The survey has shown that the distribution of families in the eight hamlets of Visavanoor is quite uneven; the main hamlet contains the largest number of families viz., 135 and Kalladithidal is also an equally bigger hamlet with 134 households but with a population greater than that of main hamlet. In this hamlet, Catholics are concentrated, especially more prosperous and hard working peasants of Udayar Catholics predominate. About three-fourths of the population are Catholics. The main hamlet shows a cross-section of varied Hindu castes, besides having the bulk of Muslim population; in no other hamlet Muslims are found. Forty one per cent of people in main hamlet are Rowthers. The hamlet of Kannappan Kudiyiruppu is a place where Protestant Christians form the major bulk of population viz., 68.5 per cent. Besides Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli are the other two settlements where Udayars predominate. North Visavanoor is the stronghold of Maravars, who exercise profound influence in the affairs of village. In the hamlet of Melakudiyiruppu or West Visavanoor lying west of and quite adjoining to the main hamlet, we see 72 per cent of people are Idayars, the shepherd caste and the other castes are Agamudiyars, Pallars and Veduvar. Pukkulam is the smallest hamlet where Idayars are the dominant and prosperous farmers, who own some wet or *nanja* lands. This hamlet was formerly an *inam* village, which was given as a gift to one Thavul Avadappa Ayyar by the Rajah of Ramnad in appreciation of his service in the estate. The Brahmin families who were once living in Pukkulam moved to towns like Tiruchirapalli, Kumbakonam etc. 1931 Census data show that there were eight Brahmin households and in 1941 there were six households. Only one family remains at present in this little hamlet. Table No. IX will give the reader an idea of the distribution of population in the different hamlets.

TABLE No.

Percentage distribution of households

| Hamlet | Total number of households | Idayar | Maravar | Parayar | Vellala | Pallar | Chettiyar | Ambattan | Vannan | Asari | Chakkiliyan | Agamudiyar | Pandaram |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) |
| Visavanoor (Main) | 135 | 20.00 | 14.81 | 5.19 | 5.93 | 0.74 | 1.48 | 6.67 | 0.74 | ... | 1.48 | 0.74 | 1.48 |
| North Visavanoor | 86 | 38.37 | 24.42 | ... | 3.49 | 5.81 | 5.81 | ... | 2.32 | 6.98 | ... | ... | 2.32 |
| West Visavanoor | 46 | 71.74 | ... | ... | ... | 13.04 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13.04 | ... |
| Kalladithidal | 134 | 14.93 | ... | 2.23 | ... | ... | 0.75 | 0.75 | 2.23 | 0.75 | 0.75 | ... | ... |
| Suriyankottai | 76 | 1.32 | ... | ... | 1.32 | ... | 1.32 | ... | 3.94 | ... | 7.89 | ... | ... |
| Pukkulam | 26 | 73.07 | 7.68 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3.85 | 3.85 | 3.85 | 3.85 | ... | ... |
| Thirugukalli | 92 | 15.22 | ... | 23.91 | 3.26 | ... | ... | 1.09 | 2.17 | 1.09 | ... | ... | ... |
| Kannappan Kudiyiruppu | 54 | 7.41 | 1.85 | ... | ... | ... | 5.56 | ... | ... | 1.85 | ... | ... | ... |
| Total | 649 | 23.27 | 6.78 | 4.93 | 2.31 | 1.85 | 1.85 | 1.85 | 1.85 | 1.54 | 1.54 | 1.08 | 0.62 |

## Natural growth

72. An idea about the natural growth of population can be had from the births and deaths statistics, which are maintained by the village officials. The total number of births and deaths during the years 1951 to 1960 and the net increase due to disparity in respect of Visavanoor village are shown below. These details however suffer from under-registration, as several births and deaths go unreported every year. Every year the number of births exceeded the number of deaths and the net increase varies from nine to forty and the total number of births over deaths in the past decade was 249. The total births were on the high side throughout the decade and especially during 1954-58, the net increase was significantly high. Of course, the effects of natural growth due to excess of births over deaths, are significant during the decade 1951-61; such figures for previous decades are not forthcoming.

| Year | Births | | | Deaths | | | Excess No. of births over deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | |
| 1951 | 18 | 24 | 42 | 18 | 15 | 33 | 9 |
| 1952 | 46 | 25 | 71 | 20 | 15 | 35 | 36 |
| 1953 | 22 | 43 | 65 | 26 | 19 | 45 | 20 |
| 1954 | 36 | 25 | 61 | 19 | 16 | 35 | 26 |
| 1955 | 34 | 33 | 67 | 19 | 17 | 36 | 31 |
| 1956 | 23 | 30 | 53 | 14 | 19 | 33 | 20 |
| 1957 | 33 | 26 | 59 | 19 | 9 | 28 | 31 |
| 1958 | 30 | 33 | 63 | 10 | 13 | 23 | 40 |
| 1959 | 23 | 13 | 36 | 10 | 12 | 22 | 14 |
| 1960 | 17 | 17 | 34 | 3 | 9 | 12 | 22 |
| Total | 282 | 269 | 551 | 158 | 144 | 302 | 249 |

IX

**in different hamlets**

| Panicker | Brahmin | Nadar | Valluvar | Veduvar | Muslim | R.C. Udayar | Catholics | R.C. Parayar | R.C. Nadar | R.C.Yadhava | R.C. Pallan | R. C. Vellala | Protestants | P.C.Maravar | P.C. Vellala | P.C.Yadhava |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) | (19) | (20) | (21) | (22) | (23) | (24) | (25) | (26) | (27) | (28) | (29) | (30) | (31) |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 40.74 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4.67 | ... | 2.32 | ... | 3.49 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | 2.18 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 0.75 | 0.75 | 1.49 | ... | ... | ... | 38.81 | 9.70 | 17.16 | 3.73 | 2.99 | 2.23 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... | 27.63 | 50.00 | 3.94 | 1.32 | 1.32 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | 3.85 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | 1.09 | ... | ... | 26.09 | 23.91 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2.17 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5.56 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7.41 | ... | ... | 1.85 | ... | ... | 48.14 | 7.41 | 3.70 | 9.26 |
| **0.62** | **0.31** | **0.31** | **0.15** | **0.15** | **8.47** | **14.94** | **12.48** | **4.01** | **1.23** | **0.92** | **0.92** | **0.31** | **4.01** | **0.62** | **0.31** | **0.77** |

73. A study of age pattern of the village population indicates a high proportion of children. In the first instance to examine the fertility rate of women, specific data relating to different factors like total live births, still births, age at birth, order of birth etc., are not available, as they are outside the scope of the socio-economic survey and the child-woman ratio can be found out, as this is a good alternative to assess the fertility position in the absence of accurate rates. Child-woman ratio is a ratio between total number of children in the village between 0 and 4 years of age to the total women in the age range 15-44.

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number of children in the age group 0-4 | 457 |
| Total number of women in the reproductive age group 15-44 | 720 |
| Number of children per 1,000 females : | 635 |

Obviously this ratio is rather high when compared to the corresponding figures for Ramanathapuram district and the State, as may be seen below.

| Place | Child-woman ratio |
|---|---|
| Visavanoor | 635 |
| Ramanathapuram district | 587 |
| State | 601 |

May be this ratio only a crude value denoting the fertility position, yet it serves as a general index useful for assessing the fertility of women. This ratio is based not on actual number of births but only on survivors and also this includes the effects of infant and childhood mortality and similar factors besides fertility. Data relating to infant mortality are not forthcoming. Let us see whether the age pattern of the population reveals any significant trend.

## Age structure

74. The age data collected in the present survey have shown that out of the total population of 3,091, as many as 1,128 persons are infants and children below 15 years, of which 457 are in the age-range 0 to 4 i.e., roughly 36.5 per cent of the village population falls below the age of 15 and the high rate of fertility is again confirmed by this large proportion of juvenile population. The table below gives the general picture of age and sex pattern of the village population, by broad age groups.

| | Age group | Males | Females | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Infants and children | 0 - 4 | 220 | 237 | 457 |
| | 5 - 14 | 338 | 333 | 671 |
| Young men and women | 15 - 24 | 241 | 294 | 535 |
| | 25 - 34 | 209 | 244 | 453 |
| Middle aged | 35 - 59 | 357 | 399 | 756 |
| Old aged | 60 & over | 104 | 115 | 219 |
| | All ages | 1,469 | 1,622 | 3,091 |

The first thing that strikes one is the higher proportion of population at the lower levels of age than the aged persons. As we go on in the higher age groups, the percentage of population declines and it is quite clearly visible in the adjoining diagram. The greater proportion of juvenile population and low percentage of elderly persons is of course, a consequence of fertility and mortality rates. The percentages of males and females in the different age groups to the respective totals are given in the statement below.

| Age range (Years) | Percentage distribution | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| 0-14 | 38.0 | 35.2 | 36.5 |
| 15-24 | 16.4 | 18.1 | 17.3 |
| 25-34 | 14.2 | 15.0 | 14.6 |
| 35-59 | 24.3 | 24.6 | 24.5 |
| 60 and over | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.1 |
| All ages | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

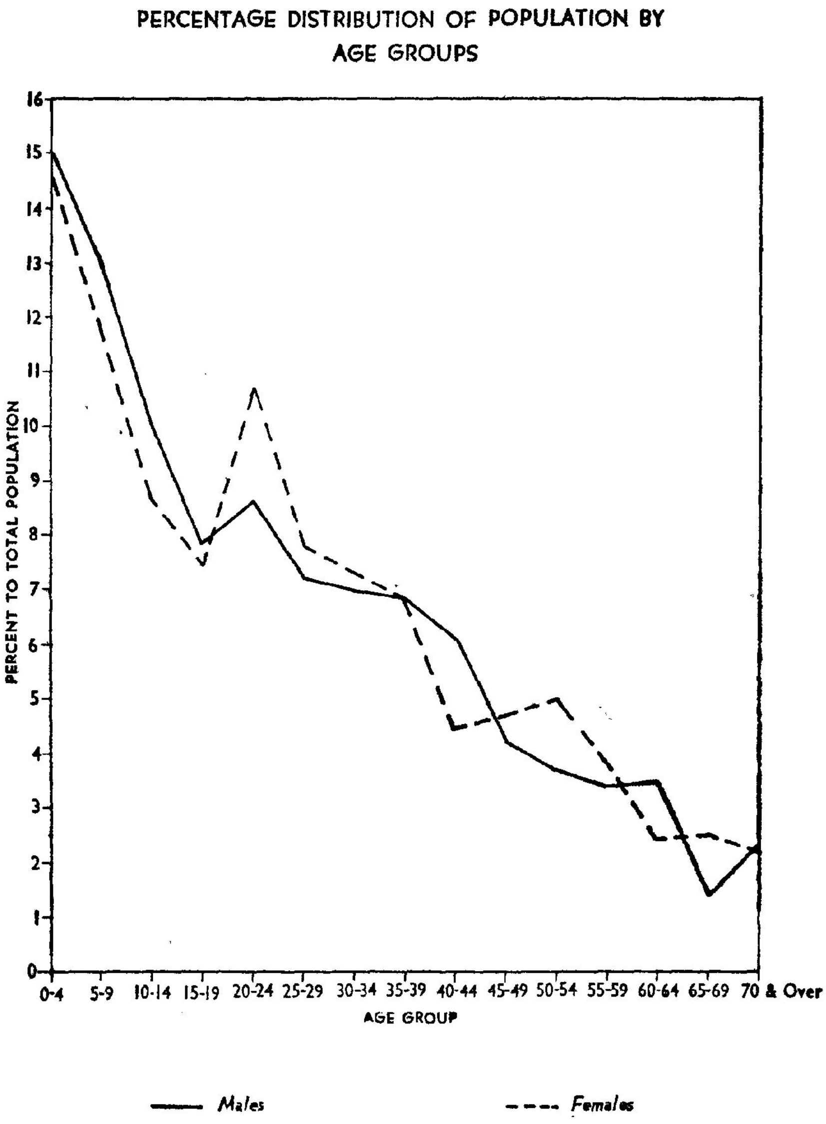
75. The village population is characterised by high percentage of younger persons and the lower proportion of middle-aged and aged persons, among both males and females. About seven per cent of the total population are elders who had reached the age of 60, among males as well as females. Young men and women between 15 and 34 years account for nearly 32 per cent while the proportion of middle aged people of ages 35 to 59 is a little less than one-fourth of the total population. The age structure is clearly of the form of a pyramid with a broader base and the declining proportions in the higher age-groups. The sex distribution among the broad age groups can very well be studied from the following data. Here, the proportion of males and females in the age groups are shown as the percentage to total persons in the particular age group.

| Age group (Years) | Percentage of males to total population in the age group | Percentage of females to total population in the age group | Total percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 48.1 | 51.9 | 100.0 |
| 5-14 | 50.4 | 49.6 | 100.0 |
| 15-34 | 45.5 | 54.5 | 100.0 |
| 35-59 | 47.2 | 52.8 | 100.0 |
| 60 & over | 47.5 | 52.5 | 100.0 |
| All ages | 47.5 | 52.5 | 100.0 |

Taking the population as a whole, the sex break-up of population is that there are 1,622 females as against 1,469 males, the percentage being 52.5 and 47.5. Of course, it is clearly seen that women predominate over men in all these broad age groups, except in 5-14; proportion of females is high especially among adults and middle-aged people viz., in the age ranges 15-34 and 35-59. The high percentage of women in the working age groups again goes to confirm the notion that the element of migration of male population has its impact on age pattern.

## Density

76. Visavanoor occupies an area of 7.72 square miles or 4,940.80 acres, with a total population of 3,091; the density of population works out to 400 persons per square mile. The population density for the previous decades and the respective figures in regard to Paramakudi taluk and Ramanathapuram district are given below for purpose of comparison.



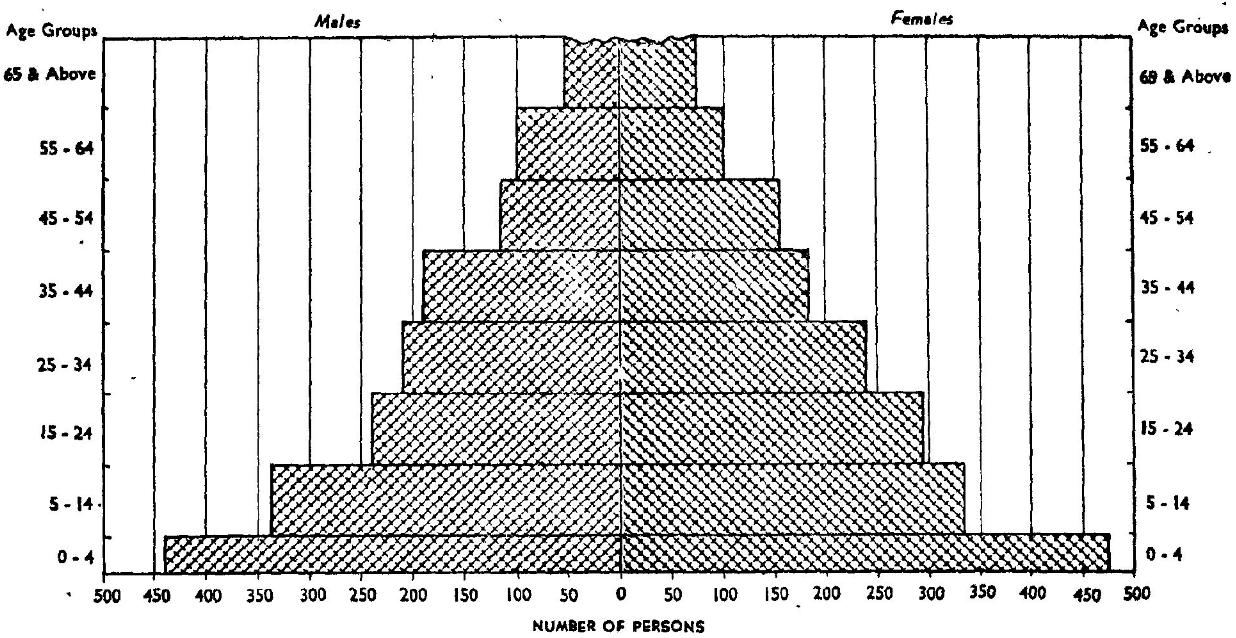

| Year. | Density per square mile | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Visavanoor village | Paramakudi taluk | Ramanathapuram district |
| 1941 | 280 | 406 | 413 |
| 1951 | 511* | 413 | 431 |
| 1961 (Census) | 391 | ... | 502 |
| 1961 (Survey) | 400 | ... | ... |

* Excluding two hamlets

## Sex ratio

77. The sex pattern of the village population is characterised by a significantly high predominance of women over men. According to the present enquiry, there are 1,622 females as against 1,469 males, the sex ratio being 1,104. The high predominance

# AGE PYRAMID


Males
Females
Age Groups
65 & Above
68 & Above
55 - 64
45 - 54
35 - 44
25 - 34
15 - 24
5 - 14
0 - 4
500 450 400 350 300 250 200 150 100 50 0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450 500
NUMBER OF PERSONS

of female population can well be attributed to the large scale migration of male population to overseas countries, which is a natural phenomenon in East Ramanathapuram region. The sex ratios according to the previous Census figures are given below.

| Year | Population | | Sex ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | |
| 1911 | 1,001 | 1,262 | 1,261 |
| 1921 | 930 | 1,199 | 1,289 |
| 1931 | 1,082 | 1,320 | 1,220 |
| 1941 | 955 | 1,208 | 1,265 |
| 1951 | 772 | 924 | 1,197* |
| 1961 (Census) | 1,417 | 1,605 | 1,133 |
| 1961 (Survey) | 1,469 | 1,622 | 1,104 |

* Excluding two hamlets

Throughout the past decades from 1911 onwards, the sex ratio i.e., the number of females per 1,000 males stood at a high level. During the decades 1911-21 and 1931-41, the sex ratio has shown an increase and after 1941, it followed a decreasing trend. During the decade 1911-21, the population had decreased from 2,263 to 2,129 and during 1931-41 also, there was a steep decline of population. In all probability, the out-migration of male population was the major cause for the decline of population and this leads to the inference that the rise in the sex ratio in these decades would have been the result of preferential migration of male population during these periods. In the decade 1921-31, there was an increase of population to the tune of 273 persons and the sex ratio has shown a corresponding decrease. The sex disparity always tends to vary according to the growth or decline of population. Generally, men while going abroad for overseas countries do not take their wives on any account; they leave their wives and other members of family in the village itself. Among Muslims a large number of families depend primarily on the periodical remittances from the head of household or eldest son working in Malaya or such places. The sex ratio naturally varies from community to community. Among all castes, except Asari, Chakkiliyar, Pandaram etc., females outnumber males. The predominance of women over men is more visible among Muslims rather than Hindus or Christians.

**Disparity in sex ratio**

78. The following figures represent the sex ratio among people of different religions.

| Religion | Males | Females | Sex ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hindus | 733 | 813 | 1,109 |
| Muslims | 106 | 143 | 1,349 |
| Christians | 630 | 666 | 1,057 |
| **Total** | **1,469** | **1,622** | **1,104** |

Among Muslims, for every 100 men, there are about 135 females which is a significant feature. The sex ratio for Hindu population is just above the average sex ratio for the whole village, while among Christians sex ratio which is not significantly high, falls below the village level. This disparity again goes to confirm that the element of migration, which is a significant factor among the Muslim community, is the chief reason for the high sex ratio for Muslims. The trends of sex ratio in Paramakudi taluk and the district for the past decades are shown below, which are self-explanatory.

| Place | Sex ratio in different years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1931 | 1941 | 1951 | 1961 |
| Visavanoor | 1,220 | 1,265 | 1,197 | 1,133 |
| Paramakudi taluk | 1,198 | 1,154 | 1,137 | 1,100 |
| Ramanathapuram district | 1,108 | 1,087 | 1,090 | 1,060 |
| Madras State | 1,027 | 1,012 | 1,007 | 992 |

The sex disparity will not be the same among the different age groups. The sex ratio among the population of various age ranges is given below.

| | Age group | Males | Females | Sex ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Infants and young children | 0- 4 | 220 | 237 | 1,077 |
| | 5-14 | 338 | 333 | 985 |
| Young men and women | 15-34 | 450 | 538 | 1,196 |
| Middle aged persons | 35-59 | 357 | 399 | 1,118 |
| Old aged | 60 and over | 104 | 115 | 1,106 |
| | **All ages** | **1,469** | **1,622** | **1,104** |

The sex ratio is very high among the people of age groups 15-34 and 35-59, as compared to other age groups. In no age group, parity of sex is noticed. Among infants of below five years of age, the sex ratio is 1,077 which is below the average; it sinks rapidly at the next age range and no significant reason is attributed to this. The marked increase of sex ratio during the successive age groups can well be attributed to migration. The emigrants are generally found in these working age groups and as a result, the resident population becomes predominantly female especially in these age ranges. The proportion of females among the aged persons who crossed the age of 60 is almost the average level for the entire population.

**Size of household**

80. A large variation is observed in the size of household in Visavanoor, which varies from one member to 26 members. The average number of persons per household works out to 4.76. Table No. X reflects the position in regard to size of household according to different communities in the village.

TABLE No. X

**Size of Household**

| Community | No. of households | Single member | | | 2-3 members | | | 4-6 members | | | 7-9 members | | | 10 members and over | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Households | Males | Females | Households | Males | Females | Households | Males | Females | Households | Males | Females | Households | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) |
| Idayar | 151 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 37 | 38 | 55 | 85 | 205 | 213 | 17 | 61 | 73 | 5 | 32 | 24 |
| Maravar | 44 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 22 | 48 | 60 | 4 | 15 | 16 | 2 | 11 | 9 |
| Parayar | 32 | 1 | ... | 1 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 32 | 38 | 7 | 24 | 32 | 2 | 10 | 11 |
| Vellala | 15 | 2 | ... | 2 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 12 | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallan | 12 | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 17 | 25 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 2 | ... | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 12 | 17 | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 14 | 9 |
| Vannan | 12 | 1 | 1 | ... | 6 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 14 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Asari | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 17 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 16 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 5 | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 55 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 19 | 17 | 31 | 27 | 63 | 69 | 4 | 16 | 15 | 3 | 9 | 27 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 11 | 2 | 9 | 49 | 59 | 67 | 114 | 273 | 286 | 40 | 155 | 151 | 12 | 83 | 75 |
| Protestants | 37 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 19 | 18 | 12 | 21 | 39 | 4 | 16 | 16 | ... | ... | ... |
| Total | 649 | 39 | 13 | 26 | 170 | 191 | 242 | 321 | 753 | 824 | 91 | 339 | 363 | 28 | 173 | 167 |

There are as many as twenty eight large households in all, with ten members or more; the total number of family members in all these households is 340, 173 of them are males and 167 females. The table below reflects the pattern of large and small sized households.

| Size of household | Number of households | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Single member | 39 | 6.0 |
| 2 - 3 members | 170 | 26.2 |
| 4 - 6 members | 321 | 49.5 |
| 7 - 9 members | 91 | 14.0 |
| 10 members or more | 28 | 4.3 |
| **Total** | **649** | **100.0** |

Nearly one half of the households in the village are medium sized with four to six members and small households with two or three members account for 26 per cent. As many as 39 persons are living alone, forming six per cent of the total number of households. Of these 39 single-member households, 13 are men and double this number are females. Almost all of these women living single are either widows or divorced persons. Among men remaining single, most of them are either teachers or hospital staff who have come down from other places, for the sake of employment. And 4.3 per cent or 28 households contain ten persons or more. We came across a Catholic Udayar household in Kalladithidal with 26 family members; it is a joint family consisting of a father and mother, their married sons, daughters-in-law, grand sons, grand daughters etc. Of these 28 large sized households, seven of them have ten family members and we see three households with 15 persons or more.

81. The varying size of household from community to community is shown below.

| Religion | Total number of households | Percentage of households according to size of household: 1 member | 2-3 members | 4-6 members | 7-9 members | 10 members & above | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hindus | 331 | 5.7 | 26.6 | 50.8 | 13.0 | 3.9 | 100.0 |
| Muslims | 55 | 3.6 | 34.6 | 49.1 | 7.3 | 5.4 | 100.0 |
| Catholics | 226 | 4.9 | 21.7 | 50.4 | 17.7 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| Protestants | 37 | 18.9 | 37.9 | 32.4 | 10.8 | ... | 100.0 |
| **Village Total** | **649** | **6.0** | **26.2** | **49.5** | **14.0** | **4.3** | **100.0** |

It is quite clear that among Muslims and Protestant Christians, the proportion of smaller households with three persons or less is great rather than other ethnic groups. Among Protestants, the percentage of small households works out to 56.8 and households with seven to nine members account for 10.8 per cent and none of the households consists of 10 members or above. A comparison between Hindus and Muslims is worth study. While bigger households having more than 7 persons works out to 16.9 per cent of total Hindu households, the respective proportion for Muslims comes to 12.7 per cent only. This suggests that size of household, on an average will be comparatively smaller in the case of Muslims. The following figures represent the average number of members in a household among the various castes.

| Community | Total Population | Number of households | Average size of household |
|---|---|---|---|
| HINDUS | | | |
| Idayar | 708 | 151 | 4.69 |
| Maravar | 191 | 44 | 4.34 |
| Parayan | 167 | 32 | 5.22 |
| Ambattan | 66 | 12 | 5.50 |
| Asari | 61 | 10 | 6.10 |
| Vellala | 61 | 15 | 4.07 |
| Chettiyar | 55 | 12 | 4.58 |
| Pallan | 54 | 12 | 4.50 |
| Vannan | 40 | 12 | 3.33 |
| Chakkiliyan | 57 | 10 | 5.70 |
| Agamudiyar | 35 | 7 | 5.00 |
| Other castes | 51 | 14 | 3.64 |
| ALL HINDUS | 1,546 | 331 | 4.67 |
| MUSLIMS | 249 | 55 | 4.53 |
| CHRISTIANS | | | |
| Roman Catholics | 1,160 | 226 | 5.13 |
| Protestants | 136 | 37 | 3.67 |
| **Village Total** | **3,091** | **649** | **4.76** |

Among Catholics the families are larger, while the average size of household for Protestant Christians is as low as 3.67, since as many as seven households are single-member ones out of 37 households, and only four households come under the group 7-9 members and no household with ten members or exceeding ten. Among Muslims, the average

size is 4.53, which falls below the general average for the village. The bulk of the migrants are Muslims and it is reasonable to attribute migration as a chief factor for such a low size of household. Among Hindu castes, the average size varies from 3.33 for Vannan to 6.10 in the case of Asari. It is curious to note that among the upper castes like Vellala, Chettiar, Maravar and Idayar, the average size of family is comparatively low, whereas it is somewhat high in the case of inferior castes such as Parayan, Chakkiliyan, Ambattan etc., Kammalans providing an exception.

### Marital Status

82. The chief features about the marital structure of the village society are the higher proportion of never-married men than ever-married males, the smaller proportion of unmarried women, the significantly larger percentage of widows than the widowers and greater proportion of divorced women outnumbering divorcee males. Table No. XI below relating to Age and Marital Status gives a clear idea on these special features.

**TABLE No. XI**

**Age and Marital Status**

| Age group (Years) | Total population | | | Never married | | Married | | Widowed | | Divorced or Separated | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| All ages | 3,091 | 1,469 | 1,622 | 765 | 677 | 634 | 693 | 60 | 228 | 10 | 24 |
| 0 - 4 | 457 | 220 | 237 | 220 | 237 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5 - 9 | 383 | 191 | 192 | 191 | 192 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 10 - 14 | 288 | 147 | 141 | 147 | 141 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 15 - 19 | 236 | 115 | 121 | 112 | 81 | 3 | 38 | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| 20 - 24 | 299 | 126 | 173 | 70 | 20 | 55 | 149 | ... | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 25 - 29 | 233 | 107 | 126 | 16 | 6 | 88 | 111 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| 30 - 34 | 220 | 102 | 118 | 3 | ... | 97 | 111 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| 35 - 44 | 372 | 190 | 182 | 1 | ... | 182 | 147 | 5 | 28 | 2 | 7 |
| 45 - 59 | 384 | 167 | 217 | 5 | ... | 145 | 119 | 15 | 95 | 2 | 3 |
| 60 & over | 219 | 104 | 115 | ... | ... | 64 | 18 | 38 | 95 | 2 | 2 |

Out of 1,469 males as many as 765 are unmarried persons, the percentage being 52 and among female population, 677 are never-married, as against the total number of 1,622 females.

The proportions of married, unmarried, widowed and divorced population among males and females are as follows:

| Sex | Percentage distribution | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never married | Married | Widowed | Divorced | Total |
| Males | 52.1 | 43.1 | 4.1 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| Females | 41.8 | 42.7 | 14.1 | 1.4 | 100.0 |
| **Both sexes** | **46.6** | **42.9** | **9.4** | **1.1** | **100.0** |

It is obviously clear that unmarried males outnumber ever-married men while the proportions are quite the reverse among female population. Only 41.8 per cent of females are unmarried, 42.7 per cent of them married, 14.1 per cent widowed, and 1.4 per cent remain separated or divorced. The conspicuous points revealed by the figures above are the high proportion of widows as compared to widowers and relatively greater percentage of divorced women than the divorced males. As many as 23 women are either divorced or separated as against 10 divorced males. Among males, 52.1 per cent of them are unmarried and the respective proportion for women folk is only 41.8% and this follows the natural phenomenon in any other village. Girls are given in marriage at a very early age, while the case is otherwise for men. There are cases of men remaining unmarried even above the age of 30 whereas no spinster is found at the age of 30 or above.

**Unmarried persons**

83. Among male population, nine persons remain unmarried at the age of 30 or more. As many as five men above the age of 45 remain single but in the case of women, no spinster is found beyond the age of 29 and there are only six unmarried women, in the age range 25-29 ; one is a Brahmin teacher, another a Catholic girl and four from Hindu Idayars. Generally parents are eager to arrange weddings for their daughters and late marriages can be found among boys. The following table classifies the unmarried population according to broad age-groups. The proportions of unmarried males and females to the respective population in the particular age-range are shown as percentages.

| Age range (Years) | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total males | Never married males | Percentage to total males | Total females | Never married females | Percentage to total females |
| 0-19 | 673 | 670 | 99.6 | 691 | 651 | 94.2 |
| 20-29 | 233 | 86 | 36.9 | 299 | 26 | 8.7 |
| 30-44 | 292 | 4 | 1.4 | 300 | ... | ... |
| 45-59 | 167 | 5 | 3.0 | 217 | ... | ... |
| 60 & over | 104 | ... | ... | 115 | ... | ... |
| **All ages** | **1,469** | **765** | **52.1** | **1,622** | **677** | **41.7** |

Among boys below the age of 20, only three had entered matrimony; out of 691 girls of that age, 40 girls are ever-married (i.e) 5.8 per cent. Of the three boys married before the age of 20, one belongs to Maravar caste. one Parayar and another is a Catholic Udayar. Early marriage of boys is, however, losing ground among all communities and this aspect of 'age at marriage' is discussed in later pages. In the next age-range of 20 to 29, the proportion of unmarried women has shown a steep fall to 8.7% ; the percentage of unmarried male population works out to nearly 37%. In the successive age groups 30-44 and 45-59, the proportion of unmarried men is 1.4% and 3.0% respectively. No girl remains a spinster at the age of 30 or above. There are as many as five middle-aged men in the age group 45-59 remaining single; two persons belong to Protestant Christians, one Roman Catholic and two from Vellala caste. This goes to show that even in rural areas bachelordom at late ages is not altogether unknown, while cases of women remaining spinster are quite unheard of.

**Widowhood**

84. The socio-economic survey reveals that there are 228 widows as against 60 widowers while overall dispartity of widowed among the sexes is extremely high. There are significant variations among different age groups and different sections of the population.

| Age group (in years) | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total persons | No. of widowers | Percentage | Total persons | No of widows | Percentage |
| 0-19 | 673 | ... | ... | 691 | ... | ... |
| 20-29 | 233 | 1 | 0.4 | 299 | 5 | 1.7 |
| 30-44 | 292 | 6 | 2.1 | 300 | 33 | 11.0 |
| 45-59 | 167 | 15 | 9.0 | 217 | 95 | 43.8 |
| 60 and over | 104 | 38 | 36.6 | 115 | 95 | 83.5 |
| **All ages** | **1,469** | **60** | **4.1** | **1,622** | **228** | **14.1** |

At all age levels, the preponderence of widows is clearly seen from the above figures. Below the age of 20 neither there is a widower nor a widow.

Between the ages 20 and 29, 5 women are widows as against one widowed male. As we move higher age aranges, the percentage of widowhood increases steadil mong both the sexes but among women the incidencey of widowhood fastly increases; in the age groups 45-59 and 60 and above, the percentage of widows are 43.8 and 83.5 respectively. Among men of age 45 to 59, nine per cent of them are widowers and the proportion is as high as 36.6% among the elders who crossed the age of sixty.

**Widow remarriage**

85. Of course, among certain Hindu castes such as Maravars, Pallans, Parayans, Chakkiliyans, Vannans, Ambattans, Agamudiyars and Muslims and Christians widows are permitted to remarry. Remarriage is prohibited by caste rules among some advanced castes Brahmin, Chettiyar and Asari. The high incidence of widowhood among females than among men may be explained by the fact that widowers as a rule remarry soon after the death of their wives but among the widows only a small proportion of them opts for remarriage. Among widowers chances of remarriage remain unmitigated even at old ages, say after 50 or 60, whereas probability of widow remarriages becomes much smaller even among the middle-aged widows say, 35 to 45 and it is totally absent beyond the age of 50. These are the chief factors behind the significant disparity of widowers and widows in the age groups 45-59 and 60 and above. Accurate facts on remarriage of widows among different sections of the society are however, not forthcoming. It may be of interest to study the variations in incidence of widowhood for various communities. The figures furnished below reflect the total number of widowers and widows of different castes and their proportion to ever-married males and females in the respective castes. The proportion of widowers to total ever-married men is low among all communities. While among Hindus 9.8 per cent of ever-married men are widowers, the proportion is as low as 4 per cent among Mohammedans, 3.7 per cent in the case of Catholic Christians. The percentage for village as a whole works out to 8.5. This is quite a natural phenomenon, as widowers genarally remarry soon after the death of their spouse among all communities.

TABLE No. XII

**Widowhood**

| Community | No. of widowers | Percentage of widowers to total ever-married men | No. of widows | Percentage of widows to total ever-married women |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Idayar | 22 | 13.7 | 51 | 24.6 |
| Maravar | 1 | 2.6 | 20 | 29.0 |
| Parayar | 3 | 7.7 | 14 | 28.0 |
| Chakkiliyar | ... | ... | 3 | 20.3 |
| Ambattan | ... | ... | 5 | 28.0 |
| Vannan | 1 | 8.3 | 5 | 29.4 |
| Pallar | 1 | 7.7 | 2 | 12.5 |
| Chettiyar | 2 | 16.7 | 6 | 31.6 |
| Vellala | 1 | 7.7 | 9 | 37.5 |
| Asari | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 15.4 |
| Pandaram | 1 | 20.0 | 2 | 28.6 |
| Brahmin | ... | ... | 1 | 33.3 |
| Agamudiyar | 1 | 12.5 | 1 | 9.1 |
| Miscellaneous castes | ... | ... | 4 | 50.0 |
| All Hindus | 34 | 9.8 | 125 | 25.9 |
| Muslims | 2 | 4.0 | 20 | 22.2 |
| Roman Catholics | 23 | 3.7 | 71 | 33.3 |
| Protestants | 1 | 8.2 | 13 | 21.3 |
| Village total | 60 | 8.5 | 229 | 24.2 |

86. Remarriage of widows is prohibited among some upper castes and artisan communities such as Vellala, Chettiyar, Brahmin, Pandaram, Asari etc. The table indicates that there exists a higher proportion of widows among such castes viz., 37.5% among Vellalas, 31.6% for Chettiyars, 33.3% for Brahmins, 28.6% in the case of Pandaram, which is primarily due to the ban on widow-remarriage by caste rules. On the other hand, among castes such as Pallans, Parayans, Chakkiliyans, Maravars, Vannans and Ambattans, among whom widow-re-marriage is more prevalent, the percentage of widows is found to be low. In regard to Hindus as a whole, the proportion of widows to the total ever-married

women comes to 25.9%. The percentage for Roman Catholics stands at a high figure of 33.3 and the respective figures for Muslims and Protestant Christians are 22% and 21%. No special reasons are, however, attributed to these disproportions; widow remarriage is allowed among these religious groups.

### Divorced persons

87. Cases of divorce or separation are not many; out of 704 ever-married male population 10 persons come under 'Divorced or Separated' and 24 women out of 945 ever-married females are divorcees. The, numbers include those persons who live apart from their spouses deserted and those permanently or temporarily estranged from their spouses because of marital discord. Even in the early age of below 20, two girls remain divorced among Idayars and between 20 and 29 years there are eight divorcee women. Table No. XIII shows the details of divorced and separated persons, classified by caste, sex and age.

**TABLE No. XIII**

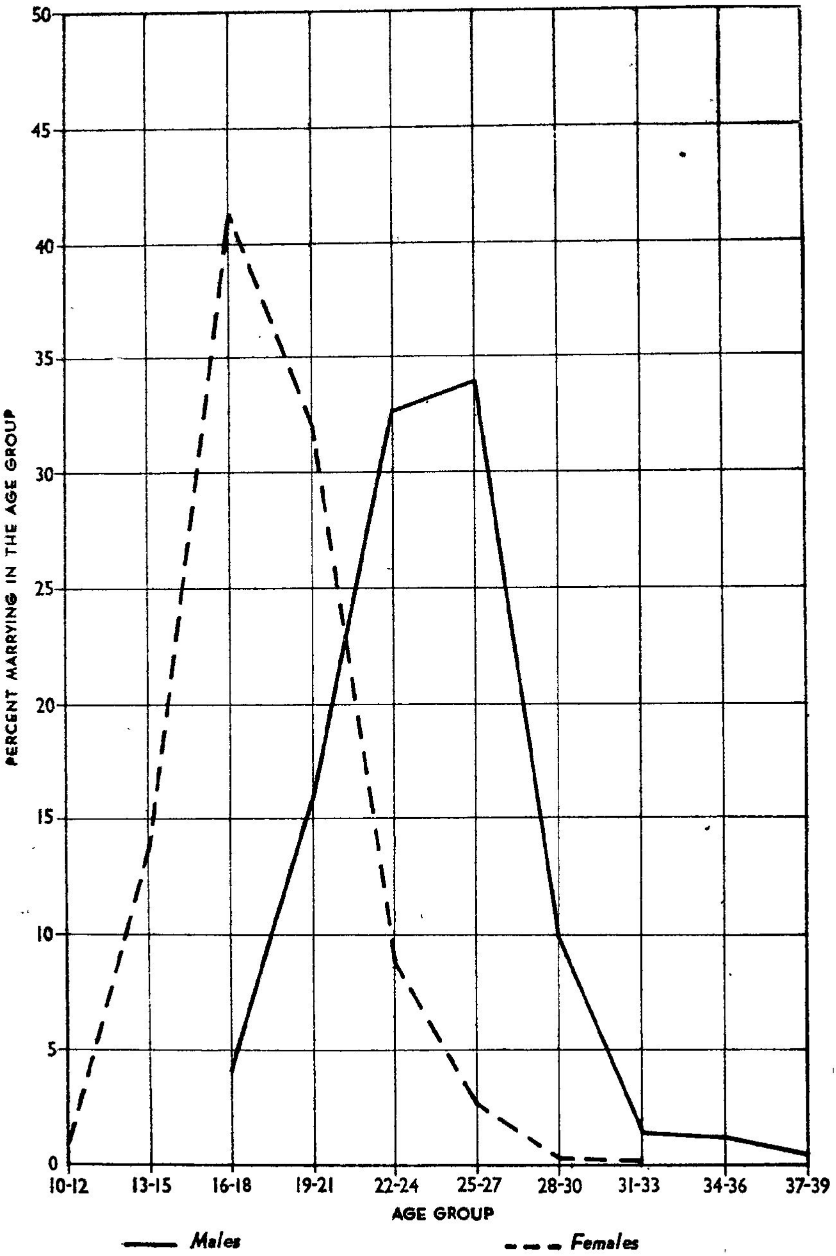
**Divorced persons**

| Community | No. of divorced males in the age group of | | | | | | | No. of divorced females in the age group of | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-44 | 45-59 | 60 & over | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-44 | 45-59 | 60 & over |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) |
| Idayar | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | 2 | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Maravar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | ... | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Parayar | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Pallan | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Vellala | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Pandaram | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vannan | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Muslims | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Roman Catholics | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Protestants | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| **Total** | .. | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 2 |

Separated or divorced women exceeds the number of men coming under this category. Only among Protestant Christians, there are two divorced men as against 'nil' in the case of females and in other communities, divorcee women predominate. The reason for the divergence is largely due to the fact that divorcee-remarriage is more frequent among men rather than women. For females possibility of remarriage is mainly confined to those divorced at relatively early ages and aged divorcees do not prefer to marry and they look for support.

88. It will be of interest to study whether the incidence of divorce vary from caste to caste. It is well known fact that divorce and divorcee remarriage are in general common among Scheduled Castes and backward castes than the upper castes and artisan castes like Asari. Among Hindu castes, divorcees are not found among Asari, Brahmin, Chakkiliyan and Agamudiyar; in the former two castes divorce is not permitted, while among the latter ones, remarriage of divorcees would have been the reason for the absence of such cases. In regard to Catholics, though the religious laws do not

# AGE AT MARRIAGE



permit divorce, yet there are four divorced men and four divorced women; of course the traditional customs and manners of their counterparts in Hinduism are reflected among them also. Catholics say that divorcees will not be permitted to marry again according to religious rites and such remarriages cannot have sanctity of the Church. The following figures reveal the proportion of divorcees to ever-married persons by sex and age-range.

| Age range (years) | Percentage of divorced men to total ever-married men in the age group | Percentage of divoreed women to total ever-married women in the age group |
|---|---|---|
| 15-24 | 1.69 | 2.07 |
| 25-34 | 1.58 | 3.36 |
| 35-44 | 1.06 | 3.85 |
| 45-59 | 1.23 | 1.38 |
| 60 and over | 1.92 | 1.74 |
| **All ages** | **1.42** | **2.54** |

Quite clear it is that at all age levels, the divorced females predominate over the divorcee men. The proportion of remarrige after divorce is always higher among males than among females, and this is true in all the age groups. This is clearly reflected by the above figures. Especially in the age groups 25-34 and 35-44, more than 3 per cent of ever-married women are divorcees. After the age of 45, the proportion of divorcees declines.

**Bigamy**

89. Bigamy is still practised among some communities in this village; Muslims are permitted to have more than one wife, the maximum being four. However, we see only one Muslim man has two living wives. According to the present survey, there were 14 bigamous men during the time of enquiry, as shown below:

| Community | No. of persons |
|---|---|
| Idayar | 5 |
| Maravar | 3 |
| Ambattan | 4 |
| Agamudiyar | 1 |
| Muslim | 1 |
| | 14 |

Bigamy is prohibited among Catholics and Protestants and among some upper castes of Hindus such as Brahmin, Vellala, Chettiyar, bigamy is not common. Among Scheduled Castes such as Pallan, Parayan, Chakkiliyan, Valluvar, bigamy is tolerated; however we see the complete absence of bigamy in this village. Bigamy is mostly resorted to when the first wife bears no children; it is common that wives of a bigamous man are sisters; in some cases second marriage is held on the offer of bride's part if the bridegroom happens to be rich or close relative! The spread of education has its effect on bigamy; it is slowly given up by younger generation.

**Age at marriage**

90. From the Table on Age and marital status it is seen that out of 704 ever-married men only three come under age-range 15-19 and the remaining persons are aged 20 and above and among 945 ever-married women only 38 married women and two divorcees are in the age group 15 to 19 and nobody comes under the age of 15. This indicates that child marriage is not so common. The age at first marriage reported by the ever-married men and women will give us a clear idea on this aspect. The following statement classifies the ever-married persons according to their age at first marriage. It is distinctly clear that age at marriage for women starts much earlier than for men. The largest proportion of women married between the ages 16 and 18, while for men the optimum concentration is found in the age range 25 to 27, though a slightly less percentage of men had married between 22 and 24. Eight women entered matrimony even below the age of 12, one of them married just at the age of ten; and 130 women married at the ages 13 to 15, and 38 out of them had married at the ages 13 and 14, that is 46 females entered matrimony between 10 and 14. But according to Table No. XI in the age group below 15, nobody has roported married and all the married women were of age higher than 15. This indicates that early marriage was once prevalent here and now it is slowly losing ground. The age at marriage has considerably advanced and wedding before the age of 15, is quite uncommon. In the case of males also, the trend appears to be the same. From the data on age at marriage, we see 28 men married between the ages 16 and 18, and 11 married at the age of 19, thus the total

number married before 20 comes to 39. But at the time of survey, there were only three men below the age of 20 returned as married and so it is inferred that age at marriage is advanced among men also; spread of education and the growth of civilization and expanding contact with outer world are the prime reasons for the change.

| Age at first marriage | Males | | Females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percentage to total | Number | Percentage to total |
| 10-12 | ... | ... | 8 | 0.85 |
| 13-15 | ... | ... | 130 | 13.76 |
| 16-18 | 28 | 3.98 | 389 | 41.16 |
| 19-21 | 112 | 15.91 | 303 | 32.06 |
| 22-24 | 230 | 32.67 | 83 | 8.78 |
| 25-27 | 239 | 33.95 | 26 | 2.75 |
| 28-30 | 71 | 10.09 | 4 | 0.42 |
| 31-33 | 11 | 1.56 | 1 | 0.11 |
| 34-36 | 9 | 1.28 | ... | ... |
| 37-39 | 3 | 0.42 | ... | ... |
| 40 & above | 1 | 0.14 | ... | ... |
| Age not known | ... | ... | 1 | 0.11 |

**Late marriage**

91. Among men late marriage is found to be common; as many as 95 males reported their age at marriage to be 27 or exceeding 27, and 24 of them had married after attainment of thirty years. Most of them belong to Christianity and Maravar, Chettiar, Yadhavar castes of Hinduism. Among women folk, nearly 88 per cent married before the age of 21 and 2.75 per cent had entered wedlock between the ages 25 and 27 and only four had married between the ages 28 and 30 and one married at the age of 31. Such late marriages occure among Chakkiliyan, Ambattan and Chettiyar castes. Muslim community is characterised by early age of marriage of girls. Out of 90 women, as many as 82 i e. 91.1 per cent had married at the age 20 or before 20 and the rest had married between 20 and 23 years of age.

**Literacy**

92. Every cloud has its silver lining; with all the backwardness and acute poverty, Visavanoor has fairly high level of literacy viz., 44.3 per cent for men and 11.7 for females. We find as many as 24 matriculates and one graduate in Visavanoor, thanks to Catholic mission which did pioneer service. There are five schools including the Catholic Higher Elementary School at Kalladithidal, which dates back to two decades or more. The people of Kalladithidal, especially Catholics are proud of this good old school, which has produced many E. S. L. C.'s who are now teachers in local schools and schools in this region. The only graduate in this village belongs to Catholic Udayar community. Even among females, there are 10 teachers, most of them working in primary schools in the different hamlets. The level of literacy according to socio-economic survey will be seen from Table No. XIV. The literacy percentages shown above are based on population of all age groups, including 0-4 years and the effective literacy rate in respect of population of age five years and above will be still higher. Of 1,249 male population of aged five and above, 650 are literates, the percentage being 52 and the similar percentage of literates for females works out to 13.7%. The girls' education has not made any headway in this village, just as in other remote villages. The people do not normally encourage the idea of sending girls to schools and the position is not bright even now. There are three women passed Matriculation or S. S. L. C. examination, as against 21 matriculates and one graduate among males. Among the present generation of school going children, out of 338 boys aged 5-14, 63 per cent attend school, whereas only 36.6 per cent of such girls do so. For girls education is generally limited to the age five to ten or twelve; after puberty seldom they are sent to school.

**Literacy trends**

93. The level of literacy varies from one age group to another, and this will help to study the trend from the past to the present day. The

## TABLE No. XIV

### Literacy

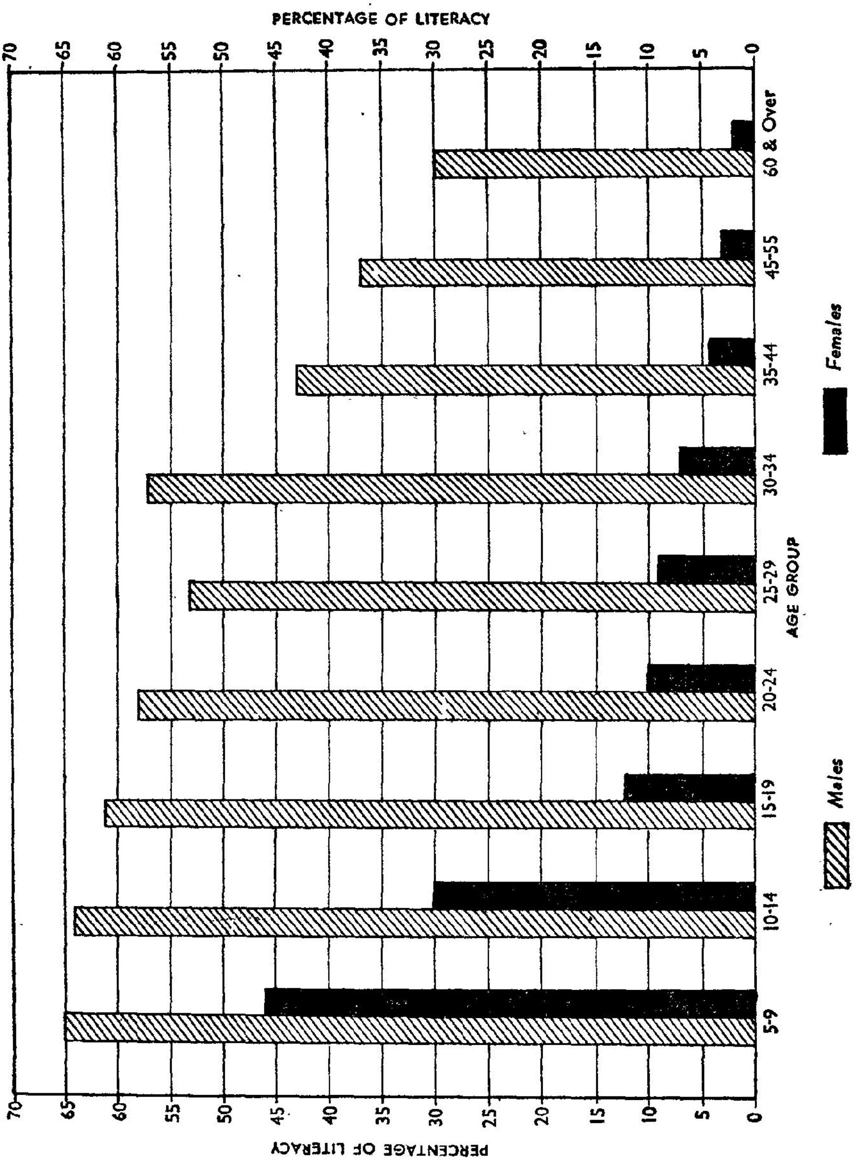
| Age group | Population | | | Illiterates | | Literates without educational standard | | Primary or Junior Basic | | Matric or Higher Secondary | | Intermediate or P.U.C | | Graduate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) |
| All ages | 3,091 | 1,469 | 1,622 | 819 | 1,432 | 456 | 149 | 172 | 38 | 21 | 3 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| 0-4 | 457 | 220 | 237 | 220 | 237 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5-9 | 383 | 191 | 192 | 66 | 104 | 122 | 88 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 10-14 | 288 | 147 | 141 | 47 | 99 | 56 | 28 | 44 | 14 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 15-19 | 236 | 115 | 121 | 47 | 106 | 24 | 5 | 39 | 10 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 20-24 | 299 | 126 | 173 | 54 | 159 | 38 | 7 | 30 | 6 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 25-29 | 233 | 107 | 126 | 50 | 117 | 32 | 6 | 20 | 1 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 30-34 | 220 | 102 | 118 | 43 | 112 | 42 | 4 | 15 | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| 35-44 | 372 | 190 | 182 | 109 | 174 | 65 | 4 | 15 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 45-59 | 384 | 167 | 217 | 108 | 211 | 51 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 60 & over | 219 | 104 | 115 | 75 | 113 | 26 | 2 | 2 | ... | | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

P — Persons M — Males F — Females

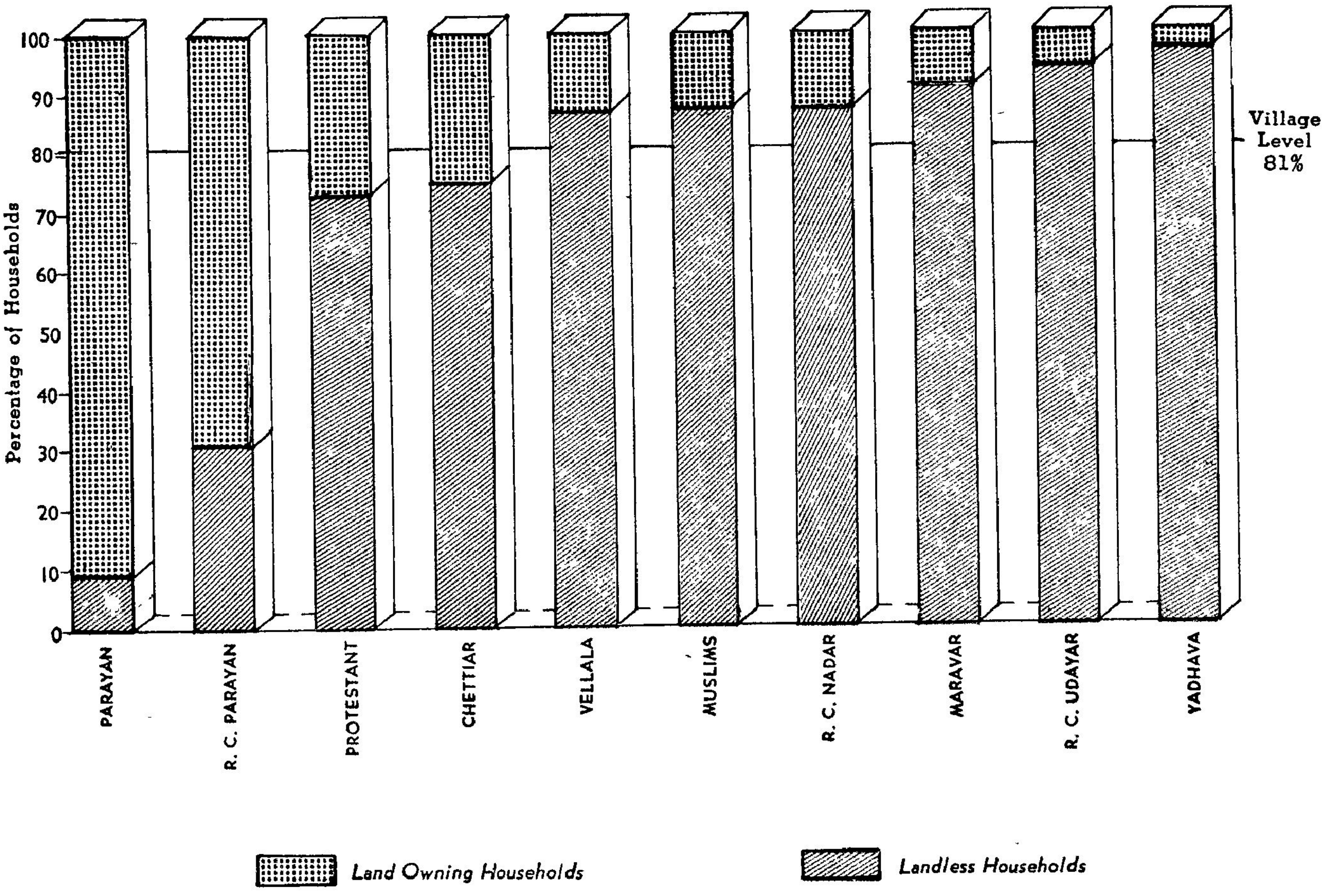
following table gives the proportion of literate population by sex and age-range. From the trends of literacy rates for males and females of different age levels, a significant advancement in literacy level in the younger generation is noticed. Among elders the literacy level is very low, while the literacy rates are steadily increasing as the age decreases. The trend is more steep in respect of females rather than males, as will be clearly seen from the diagram. On the whole, the picture emerging from these data raises some hope that the younger generation will be better educated than the present generation. The significant feature noticed among men is that even out of 104 aged men of 60 years and above, 29 are literates, the percentage being 27.9.

| Age group | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total persons | No. of literates | Per-centage | Total persons | No. of literates | Per-centage |
| 0-4 | 220 | ... | ... | 237 | ... | ... |
| 5-9 | 191 | 125 | 65.5 | 192 | 88 | 45.8 |
| 10-14 | 147 | 100 | 68.0 | 141 | 42 | 29.8 |
| 15-19 | 115 | 68 | 59.1 | 121 | 15 | 12.4 |
| 20-24 | 126 | 72 | 57.1 | 173 | 14 | 8.1 |
| 25-29 | 107 | 57 | 53.0 | 126 | 9 | 7.1 |
| 30-34 | 102 | 59 | 57.8 | 118 | 6 | 5.1 |
| 35-44 | 110 | 81 | 42.6 | 182 | 8 | 4.4 |
| 45-59 | 167 | 59 | 35.3 | 217 | 6 | 2.8 |
| 60 and over | 104 | 29 | 27.9 | 115 | 2 | 1.7 |
| All ages | 1,469 | 650 | 44.3 | 1,622 | 190 | 11.7 |

AGE AND LITERACY



# OWNERSHIP OF LAND



**Educational standards**

94. The literate population are classified, according to the educational standards attained as shown below.

| Educational Standards | No. of males | No. of females | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Literates without educational standard | 456 | 149 | 605 |
| Primary or Junior Basic | 172 | 38 | 210 |
| Matriculation | 21 | 3 | 24 |
| Graduate | 1 | .. | 1 |
| **Total literates** | **650** | **190** | **840** |

The percentage distribution of the various categories is given below.

| Description | Percentage of each category to total males | Percentage of each category to total females |
|---|---|---|
| Illiterates | 55.75 | 88.28 |
| Literates without educational standard | 31.04 | 9.19 |
| Primary or Junior Basic | 11.71 | 2.35 |
| Matriculation | 1.43 | 0.18 |
| Graduates | 0.07 | ... |
| **Total** | **100.00** | **100.00** |

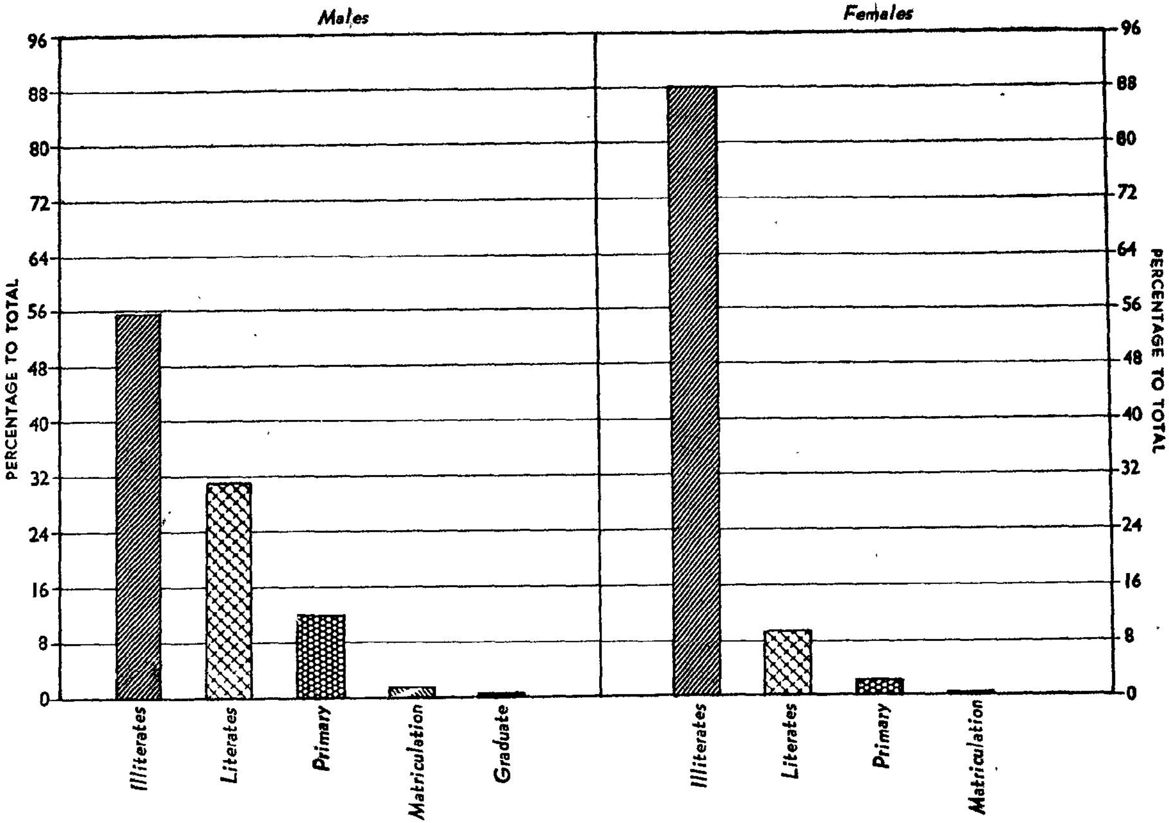
Illiterates form a striking majority both among males and females. The bulk of the literates are termed literates without educational standard; they are able to read and write simple Tamil and to do some arithmetic and these people include the category of persons who have attended elementary school and passed upto IV standard and those who had passed V standard i.e., who had completed primary school course, come under the group Primary or Junior basic. Such persons are 210 in number, consisting of 172 males and 38 females. The proportion of matriculates among men comes to 1.43 per cent and the ratio works out 0.18 per cent and the matriculates are mainly drawn from upper castes of Hinduism such as Vellala, Brahmin, Maravar and Roman Catholics and Protestants. Two Nadar teachers and one from Vannan caste do not belong to this village and they came here from distant places just because they found appointment here. The following is the list of matriculates and graduate.

| Community | No. of Matriculates | | Graduates |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Males** | **Females** | **(Male)** |
| Brahmin | ... | 1 | ... |
| Vellala | 3 | ... | ... |
| Idayar | 2 | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 2 | ... | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... |
| Vannan | 1 | ... | ... |
| Muslims | ... | ... | ... |
| Protestants | 4 | 1 | ... |
| Roman Catholics | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | **21** | **3** | **1** |

**Communities and Literacy**

95. As compared to other religions, Christians on the whole are much advanced in this respect. The general literacy level among different sections of people is worth study. Education is not uniformly distributed. The following tables gives us an idea how sharp variations exist in the literacy rates, among various communities. It is clearly visible that the high castes are more educationally advanced and the literacy position among Harijans remains miserably low and female literacy is a thing non-existent among them.

# LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS



| Community | Percentage of literates | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Both sexes |
| Chettiyar | 62.5 | 29.0 | 43.6 |
| Asari | 61.8 | 18.5 | 42.6 |
| Vellala | 58.6 | 15.6 | 36.1 |
| Maravar | 55.7 | 11.7 | 31.9 |
| Brahmin | 50.0 | 100.0 | 75.0 |
| Ambattan | 44.8 | 8.1 | 24.2 |
| Idayar | 35.5 | 6.0 | 20.2 |
| Vannan | 35.0 | ... | 17.5 |
| Agamudiyar | 26.7 | ... | 11.4 |
| Pallar | 22.7 | ... | 9.3 |
| Pandaram | 21.4 | ... | 13.1 |
| Chakkiliyan | 10.0 | ... | 5.3 |
| Parayan | 9.2 | ... | 4.2 |
| Other castes | 40.9 | 4.8 | 23.3 |
| **All Hindus** | **36.6** | **7.4** | **21.3** |
| Muslims | 57.6 | 16.1 | 33.7 |
| Roman Catholics | 49.7 | 13.1 | 31.1 |
| Protestants | 55.2 | 37.2 | 44.9 |
| **Village Total** | **44.3** | **11.7** | **27.2** |

### School attending children

96. The proportion of school attending children aged 5-14 among different communities is shown below.

| Community | Percentage of school attendance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls |
| Chettiyar | 100.0 | 88.9 |
| Panicker | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Vannan | 100.0 | ... |
| Vellala | 71.4 | 66.7 |
| Asari | 70.0 | 16.7 |
| Pandaram | 66.7 | ... |
| Ambattan | 62.5 | 37.5 |
| Maravar | 60.0 | 66.7 |
| Idayar | 59.7 | 20.0 |
| Agamudiyar | 40.0 | ... |
| Pallar | 20.0 | ... |
| Parayar | 18.2 | ... |
| Chakkiliyan | 16.7 | ... |
| Brahmin, Valluvan, Nadar, Veduvar | ... | No school age children |
| **Total for Hindus** | **54.3** | **26.6** |
| Muslims | 84.0 | 46.4 |
| Protestants | 90 0 | 84.2 |
| Roman Catholics | 68.5 | 39.4 |
| **Village Total** | **63.0** | **36.6** |

In regard to school attendance also, a large extent of diversity is seen between upper castes and depressed classes. Among boys of Pallan, Parayan and Chakkiliyan castes, only a low percentage of them are sent to school and the remaining persons go to fields for cooly work in harvest and weeding seasons. Girls' education continues to be poor among these low castes and no girl is sent to school. Only among some advanced castes, the position is improving and the percentage of school attendance of girls exceeds 66 per cent among Maravar, Vellala, Chettiyar etc., while it is low among Asari, Yadhava and Vannans, Pandarams and Agamudiyars do not send their girls to school. Even among Muslims the school attendance for boys is encouraging, but only 46 per cent of girls receive school education. Of Christians, Protestant Christians are well advanced than Catholics.

### Village schools

97. There are five schools, one primary schoo in main village and one in each of the hamlets Suriyankottai, Thirugukalli and Kannappan Kudiyirippu besides St. Anthony Higher Elementary School at Kalladithidal. The schools at Visavanoor and Thirugukalli are run by the Panchayat Union authorities, formerly by the erstwhile Ramanathapuram District Board and the others are Mission schools. The strength of the schools and the management are detailed below.

| Hamlet | Name of school | Highest Standard | No. of Teachers | No. of pupils |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visavanoor | Panchayat Union Elementary School | V Std. | 3 | 74 |
| Kalladi-thidal | St. Anthony Higher Elementary School | VIII Std | 10 | 340 |
| Suriankottai | R.C. Elementary School | V Std. | 2 | 91 |
| Thirugukalli | Panchayat Union Elementary School | IV Std. | 1 | 60 |
| Kannappan Kudiyirippu | C.S.I. Elementary School | V Std. | 3 | 85 |

C.S.I. Elementary School is run by Protestant Mission in Kannappan Kudiyiruppu, the stronghold of Protestant Christians and in the same manner Catholic schools are located in the hamlets where Roman Catholics predominate. While the Christian Mission

schools are housed in good buildings with better equipments, the schools run by Panchayat Union are not upto the mark. The building is quite inadequate; the elementary school in main hamlet having three teachers and 74 students is housed in a small building with floor area less than 300 sq. feet. A new building was slowly coming up near the public tank on the north of the hamlet. The single teacher school in Thirugukalli is also ill-housed and no equipment is available except the inevitable blackboard.

98. No separate garden is maintained in any school. Playground for the schools is quite an unknown thing and boys and girls use the street corners, threshing ground, bank of the tank etc., to play some Indian games such as *Chadugudu*. Except the Higher Elementary School of Kalladithidal, all the schools are not equipped with enough furniture. One broken chair and one or two long benches constitute the entire furniture of the school and some old and faded maps are the only teaching equipments. The attendance of boys and girls is reported to be not good and especially in harvest seasons; pupils from lower castes and some peasant class seldom go to school. Most of them assist their parents in field labour. The nearest secondary school is at Suranam, about 4 miles away. Some well-to-do people send their boys to Ilayangudi or Devakottai which are the major towns in East Ramanathapuram region. Due to poverty, most of the pupils stop their education at VIII Standard and especially Christians go in for training of school teachers after passing E.S.L.C. or VIII Standard Examination.

## Working Force

99. The working force of Visavanoor consists of men, women and also children below 10 years. Out of 3091 persons, 1471 are workers, 909 of them are males and 562 females. The proportion of economically active population for the different sex break-up is shown below. Economically active population or working force has been defined to include all the persons who are engaged in gainful economic activity. The rent receivers and recipients of unearned or transfer incomes have been excluded. The number of workers and non-workers with sex and age break-up is shown in Table No. XV. Economically active persons account for 47.6 per cent of the village population. Among males of course, workers constitute a higher proportion, viz., 62 per cent and in the case of womenfolk, non-workers out number workers. This si but natural as most of the females among upper castes do not go out for work and women generally attend to household duties only.

### TABLE No. XV

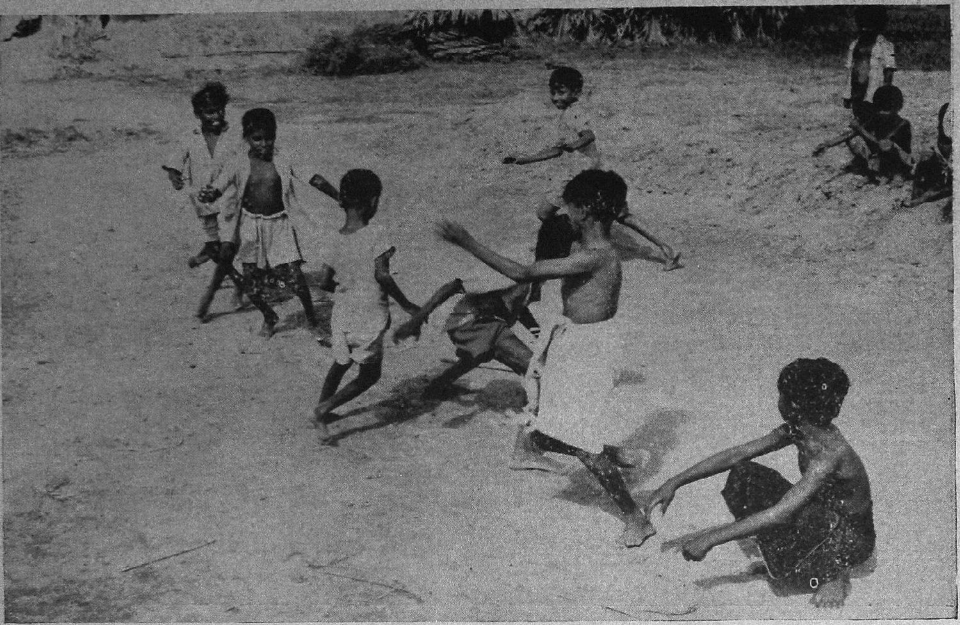
**Workers and non-workers by sex ratio and age groups**

| Age group | Total population | | | Workers | | | Non-workers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females | Persons | Males | Females | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| All ages | 3,091 | 1,469 | 1,622 | 1,471 | 909 | 562 | 1,620 | 560 | 1,060 |
| 0- 4 | 457 | 220 | 237 | ... | ... | ... | 457 | 220 | 237 |
| 5- 9 | 383 | 191 | 192 | 21 | 8 | 13 | 362 | 183 | 179 |
| 10-14 | 288 | 147 | 141 | 108 | 46 | 62 | 180 | 101 | 79 |
| 15-19 | 236 | 115 | 121 | 158 | 89 | 69 | 78 | 26 | 52 |
| 20-24 | 299 | 126 | 173 | 210 | 121 | 89 | 89 | 5 | 84 |
| 25-29 | 233 | 107 | 126 | 174 | 107 | 67 | 59 | ... | 59 |
| 30-34 | 220 | 102 | 118 | 164 | 102 | 62 | 56 | ... | 56 |
| 35-44 | 372 | 190 | 182 | 283 | 189 | 94 | 89 | 1 | 88 |
| 45-49 | 384 | 167 | 217 | 248 | 161 | 87 | 137 | 6 | 130 |
| 60 & over | 219 | 104 | 115 | 105 | 86 | 19 | 114 | 18 | 96 |

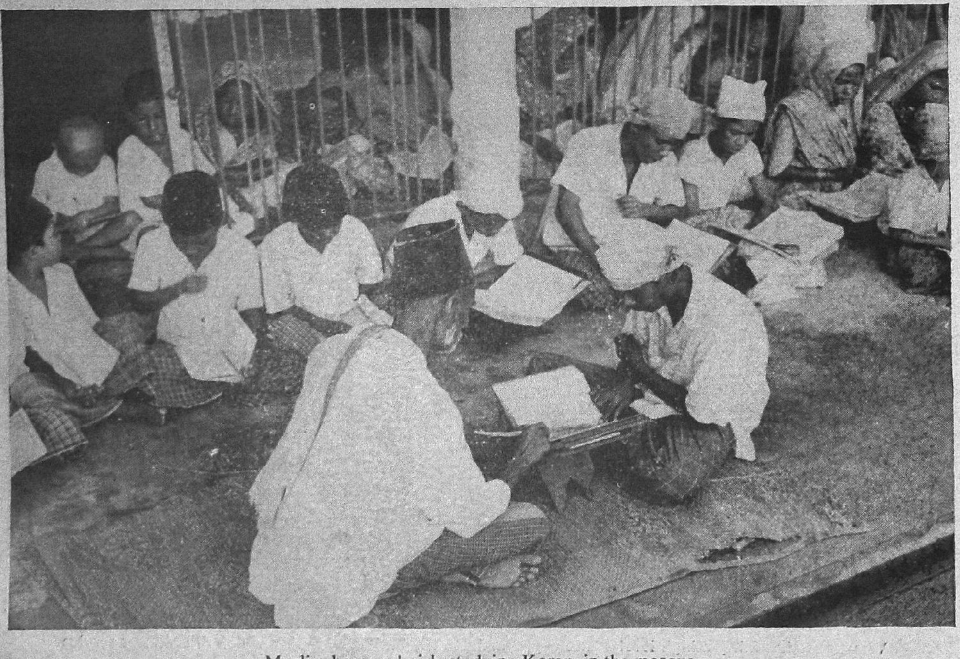
2 2 JUN 1965

The village school

Visavanoor has fairly a high level of literacy, thanks to the Catholic Mission which did pioneer service



Playground for the school is quite an unknown thing and boys play on the threshing ground and street corners.



Muslim boys and girls studying Koran in the mosque

100. The Table below indicates the proportion of working force in the varying age levels, the number of workers given as percentage to total population in the respective age groups.

| Age group | Percentage of workers | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Both sexes |
| 0-14 | 9.9 | 13.2 | 11.5 |
| 15-34 | 93.8 | 53.7 | 72.0 |
| 35-59 | 98.3 | 45.9 | 70.6 |
| 60 and over | 83.7 | 15.7 | 47.9 |
| **All ages** | **62.3** | **34.8** | **47.9** |

Even from the younger ages, considerable proportion of persons are economically active. One cannot fail to notice that among castes like Parayan, Pallan, Chakkiliyan, Udayars and Catholic Nadars, a large number of boys and girls are workers. On the whole, eight boys and 13 girls in the age range 5-9 and 46 boys and 62 girls of ages 10 - 14 are returned as workers. Most of them assist their parents and family members in cultivation work and among agricultural labour class, these youngsters work as independent cooly earning some amount which will ease the financial troubles of these poorer sections. The nature of activity of juvenile population is worth study. The figures indicate the working status, studentship etc., of the youngsters of age below 20.

| Age group | Total population | | Workers | | Students | | House-wives | Dependants including unemployed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | F | M | F |
| 5- 9 | 191 | 192 | 8 | 13 | 125 | 86 | 3 | 58 | 90 |
| 10-14 | 147 | 141 | 46 | 62 | 88 | 36 | 31 | 13 | 12 |
| 15-19 | 115 | 121 | 89 | 69 | 17 | 5 | 46 | 9 | 1 |

Even among the age group 5-9, 8 boys and 13 girls are working and large number of them are students and 3 girls attend to household duties. Similarly in the next higher age group 10-14 there are 108 workers as against 124 school going persons and 31 girls attend to household work, one boy unemployed and 24 are dependants. Between the ages 15-19, workers predominate over other categories. Considering the broad age ranges 15-34 and 35-59, over 70 per cent of persons are economically active; among males the percentage of workers is 93.8 and among females it is 53.7. Among people of age 35-59 the proportion of workers for men becomes higher while for women the percentage of workers declines to 45.9. Among the old aged persons who had reached 60, 83.7% of men are working and the proportion for women is only 15.7.

**Communities and dependants**

101. The proportion of workers, incidence of dependency and the composition of dependants vary from caste to caste. While women from Vannan, Idayar castes and inferior communities like Pallan, Parayan, Chakkiliyan etc., go in for farm labour or traditional work, the higher castes like Pillai, Chettiar, Brahmin do not encourage this. The burden of dependency is high for such caste people and the entire burden of work falls on the head of household or able bodied adult population. The number of dependants per 100 workers for the whole village works out to 110. The large number of juvenile population and the predominance of females which are the prime demographic characteristics are the main reasons for such a high proportion of dependants. Table No. XVI indicates the varying degree in burden of dependency from community to community.

**TABLE No. XVI**

**Burden of dependency**

| Community | Total dependants | Total workers | No. of dependants per 100 workers |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ambattan | 45 | 21 | 214 |
| Pillai | 41 | 20 | 205 |
| Chettiyar | 35 | 20 | 175 |
| Brahmin | 5 | 3 | 167 |
| Asari | 36 | 25 | 144 |
| Maravar | 108 | 83 | 130 |
| Pandaram | 13 | 10 | 130 |
| Agamudiyar | 19 | 16 | 119 |
| Idayar | 336 | 372 | 90 |
| Vannan | 18 | 22 | 82 |
| Chakkiliyan | 25 | 32 | 78 |
| Parayan | 68 | 99 | 69 |
| Pallan | 21 | 33 | 64 |
| Other castes | 8 | 12 | 67 |
| Muslims | 150 | 99 | 161 |
| Roman Catholics | 624 | 536 | 116 |
| Protestants | 69 | 67 | 103 |
| **Village Total** | **1,620** | **1,471** | **110** |

Among Muslims, the impact of out-migration is greater and the migrating persons being predominantly male in the working age group, the resident population consists of relatively large female population

and hence the high burden of dependency among them. The proportion of dependants among Christians is almost of the same level as for the village as a whole. Within Catholics, significant variations exist between Udayars and Harijan converts; among Catholic Pallans and Parayans, the burden of dependency falls far below 100 just like Hindu Pallans and Parayans. Generally the burden of dependency is more among businessmen and owner cultivators, while it is far less in the case of landless labour families. Availability of manpower varies according to castes, sex, age, type of family etc. Generally we see more idle man power in joint families rather in simple or nucleated families, more in cultivating owners or non-agricultural class than among landless coolies. Among Maravars and Udayars, women of course go to fields to assist other male members in farm labour; they spare only 2 to 3 hours either in the mornings or in the afternoons after attending to several household duties like cooking, carrying water, cleaning the house, care of children etc. So the women among owner cultivators are mostly part time workers while among coolies they work full time just like male agricultural labourers.

**Non-workers**

102. Among female population a little less than two-thirds are non-workers; the proportion of workers and the type of activity of non-workers are shown according to age and sex in Table No. XVII. The predominance of dependants is found among female population; 1060 females are non-workers as against 562 workers. Among the youngsters below 15 years of age, the proportion of workers is high for females rather than males. Among boys in the age group 0-14, only 9.7 per cent are workers whereas the percentage for girls of the same age group comes to 13.2. But the proportion of students is high in the case of boys; as many as 213 boys are attending school while only 122 girls are students, Thirty four girls attend to household duties like cooking or assisting their mothers in their work. Among the people of age 15 to 34, proportion of housewives becomes very high viz., 45.5 per cent and only 5 females are students. For men the workers constitute 93 per cent and we see 13 men who are unemployed and 17 studying in schools. In the next higher age group 35-59, only 7 men out of 357 are dependants and the others are economically active population. But in the case of female population of the same age group, 181 or 45.4 per cent are workers and 50.4 per cent are attending to household duties and 4.2 per cent are dependants. In regard to old men aged 60 or above, 17.3 per cent are dependants while for women of the same age group 16.5 per cent are workers, 23.5 per cent attending household duties and 60 per cent remaining idle, without doing any sort of work.

**TABLE No. XVII**

**Non-workers by sex, age groups and nature of activity**

| Age group | Total non-workers | | | Full time students or children attending school | | Persons engaged only in household duties | | Dependants, infants and children not attending school and persons permanently disable | | Other dependants | | No. of persons unemployed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) |
| All ages | 1,620 | 560 | 1,060 | 230 | 127 | ... | 507 | 316 | 425 | ... | ... | 14 | 1 |
| 0-4 | 457 | 220 | 237 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 220 | 237 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5-9 | 362 | 183 | 179 | 125 | 86 | ... | 3 | 58 | 90 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 10-14 | 180 | 101 | 79 | 88 | 36 | ... | 31 | 12 | 12 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| 15-19 | 78 | 26 | 52 | 17 | 5 | ... | 46 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9 | 1 |
| 20-24 | 89 | 5 | 84 | ... | ... | ... | 84 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 4 | ... |
| 25-29 | 59 | ... | 59 | ... | ... | ... | 59 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 30-34 | 56 | ... | 56 | ... | ... | ... | 56 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 35-44 | 89 | 1 | 88 | ... | ... | ... | 87 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 45-59 | 136 | 6 | 130 | ... | ... | ... | 114 | 6 | 16 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 60 & over | 114 | 18 | 96 | ... | ... | ... | 27 | 18 | 69 | ... | ... | ... | ... |

# CHAPTER IV

## VILLAGE ECONOMY

**Features of economy**

103. The economy of village is essentially agrarian, the bulk of people being agriculturists; agriculture is the sole base on which the economy rests. Industry or crafts are conspicuous by their absence. Fifty eight per cent of households depend on cultivation of soil and landless labourers form 30 per cent. Among the rest of the population, thirteen families practise traditional village industries like carpentry, blacksmithy, goldsmithy and palmyra tapping. Table No. XVIII classifies the households according to the chief occupation of the household.

### TABLE No. XVIII

**Occupational classification of households**

| Community | No. of house-holds | No. of households engaged in | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Cultiva-tion only | Cultivation & Agri-cultural labour | Cultivation & other occupation | Cultiva-tion & Industry | Cultiva-tion & Business | Industry only | Business only | Business & Agricul-tural labour | Agri-cultural labour only | other occupations |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| Idayar | 151 | 53 | 86 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 | ... |
| Maravar | 44 | 24 | 12 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 1 |
| Parayar | 32 | ... | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 29 | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | 5 | 2 | 5 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| Pallar | 12 | ... | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 3 | 1 | ... | ... | 5 | ... | 3 | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Vannan | 12 | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 |
| Asari | 10 | ... | ... | ... | 7 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 2 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | 55 | 39 | 7 | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 87 | 71 | 15 | 6 | 3 | 4 | ... | 1 | 35 | 4 |
| Protestants | 37 | 9 | 12 | 3 | ... | 2 | ... | 1 | ... | 2 | 8 |
| **Village Total** | **649** | **224** | **211** | **44** | **14** | **14** | **7** | **4** | **4** | **96** | **31** |

**Occupational pattern**

104. There are four distinct occupational classes speaking in economic terms viz., agriculture, industry, business and miscellaneous. While 87.9 per cent of families come under agricultural sector, only 2.3% follows some industrial occupations like smithy, tapping, tailoring etc. and 1.55 per cent of people carry on business and the rest viz., 8.25 per cent have miscellaneous occupations like school teacher, religious worker, barber, washerman etc. The existence of a number of schools provides employment for a good number of teachers and they form the major occupational group under the category 'Miscellaneous.' There are four families who are chiefly workers in the American Mission Hospital at Kannappan Kudiyiruppu. The different occupations carried on by the households are shown below.

| Household Occupation | No. of households | Percentage to total households |
|---|---|---|
| AGRICULTURE | | |
| Owner cultivator | 374 | 57.6 |
| Lease cultivator | 3 | 0.5 |
| Agricultural labourer | 193 | 29.8 |
| INDUSTRY | | |
| Tapping | 7 | 1.1 |
| Carpentry | 2 | 0.3 |
| Blacksmithy | 2 | 0.3 |
| Goldsmithy | 1 | 0.15 |
| Mat weaving | 1 | 0.15 |
| Tailoring | 2 | 0.3 |
| BUSINESS | | |
| Tea shop | 2 | 0.3 |
| Retail business | 7 | 1.1 |
| Rice cake selling | 1 | 0.15 |
| OTHERS | | |
| School teacher | 19 | 2.9 |
| Dhoby | 11 | 1.7 |
| Barber | 6 | 0.95 |
| Priests and religious workers | 6 | 0.9 |
| Astrologer | 1 | 0.15 |
| Village Official | 1 | 0.15 |
| Others | 10 | 1.5 |
| **Total** | **649** | **100.00** |

**Agriculture**

105. Agriculture in this village is quite uneconomic and the economy of village presents a gloomy picture, a picture of starved and toiling people. The uneconomic farming leads to poor levels of agricultural wages and so the plight of agricultural coolies is still more pathetic. There are no industries, nor even scope for new industries that the entire population with insignificant exceptions is dependent directly or indirectly upon the produce of the soil for its livelihood. The cultivators are seasonally employed and nearly 4 or 5 months they remain without work and agriculture is always subject to the vagaries of rain. The soil is naturally not fertile and as all the lands belonged to the Zamindari till recently, nobody took concrete efforts to conserve or enrich the soil and the soil is becoming more and more impoverished. Lack of assured water supply from the tanks, scanty rainfall, absence of any proper irrigation sources or any natural resources like river and the poor soil are the major handicaps of agriculture. Further the primitive type of cultivation and lack of improved tools or new chemical fertilizers and absence of improved strains of seed etc., all make the productivity of land extremely low. Visavanoor Tank is an un-improved tank with no sluice or outlet of any kind; the water got in rainy seasons could not be conserved for the use in lean months. Absence of fertile soil, coupled with frequent droughts leads to a very poor yield and the cultivator's toil for a subsistence economy is inexplicable; naturally the wage-levels of agricultural labourers are low. Further agricultural coolies do not find labour in several months in a year and so a large number of Harijan families leave their homes and move, every year to the fertile Tanjore delta, in harvest seasons just to earn some wages to keep themselves and their children in a perpetual state of semi-starvation.

**Land utilization**

106. The land utilization statistics for the village, for the Fasli year 1370, as maintained by the village karnan, are as follows :

| Type of land | Total extent Acs. Cents. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Wet lands | 531 - 40 | 11.25 |
| Dry lands | 2861 - 89 | 60.62 |
| *ANATHEENAM* | | |
| Wet lands | 8 - 84 | 0.19 |
| Dry lands | 31 - 59 | 0.67 |
| Poramboke | 1,287 - 57 | 27.57 |
| **Total** | **4,721 - 29** | **100.00** |

A large extent of uncultivable poramboke lands is ound in Visavanoor. Of the cultivated lands, the proportion of *Nanjai* or wet land works out to 15.7 per cent and so 84.3 per cent of lands are under dry cultivation, purely dependent on seasonal rains.

107. Household industry is conspicuous by its absence. The bulk of workers attend to cultivation or agricultural cooly work. The proportion of workers in business activities is also negligible. Table No. XIX furnishes the classification of workers by sex, age group and nature of occupation.

**TABLE No. XIX**

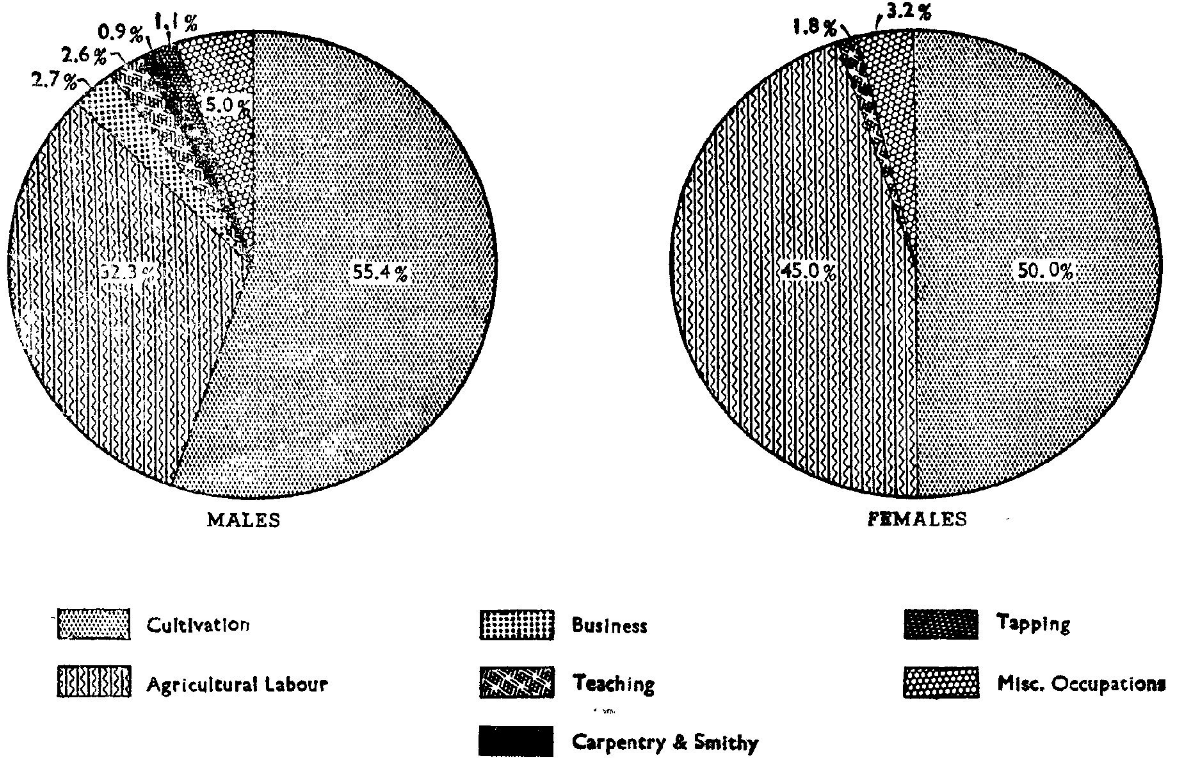
**Workers classified by sex, age group and industry, business and cultivation**

| Age group | Total workers | | | No. of workers engaged in: Household Industry | | Household Business | | Household Cultivation | | Other Occupations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| All ages | 1,471 | 909 | 562 | 20 | 2 | 11 | 2 | 506 | 283 | 372 | 275 |
| 0—4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5—9 | 21 | 8 | 13 | ... | ... | ... | . | 5 | 13 | 3 | ... |
| 10—14 | 108 | 46 | 62 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 25 | 45 | 21 | 17 |
| 15—19 | 158 | 89 | 69 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | 48 | 37 | 39 | 32 |
| 20—24 | 210 | 121 | 89 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 66 | 46 | 53 | 43 |
| 25—29 | 174 | 107 | 67 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | 49 | 34 | 56 | 33 |
| 30—34 | 164 | 102 | 62 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | 62 | 19 | 38 | 43 |
| 35—44 | 283 | 189 | 94 | 10 | ... | 4 | ... | 95 | 36 | 80 | 58 |
| 45—59 | 248 | 161 | 87 | 3 | 1 | ... | 2 | 106 | 46 | 52 | 38 |
| 60 & over | 105 | 86 | 19 | 2 | 1 | 4 | ... | 50 | 7 | 30 | 11 |

**Trade**

108. Trade or business is not a major economic activity and only 22 households carry on business on small scale, either as primary or secondary means of livelihood. Chettiyars do trade on paddy and also they own petty shops. Table No. XX gives an account of different types of trade carried on in the village.

# OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN



## TABLE No. XX

### Trade or business

| Community | Betel nut shop | | Paddy business | | Provision store | | Selling oil | | Tea shop | | Retail shop | | Selling rice cakes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of households | Average monthly profit | No. of households | Average monthly profit | No. of households | Average monthly profit | No. of households | Average monthly profit | No. of households | Average monthly profit | No. of households | Average monthly profit | No. of households | Average monthly profit |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) |
| | | Rs.nP. | | Rs.nP. | | Rs.nP. | | Rs.nP. | | Rs.nP. | | Rs.nP. | | Rs.nP |
| Agamudiyar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 10.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 5 | 36.00 | 1 | 50.00 | 1 | 25.00 | 1 | 25.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 60.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 20.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslim | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 30.00 | 1 | 20.00 | 2 | 7.50 |
| Roman Catholics | 1 | 30.00 | ... | ... | 1 | 50.00 | ... | ... | 1 | 30.00 | ... | ... | 1 | 10.00 |
| Protestants | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 40.00 | ... | ... | 1 | 15.00 |

**Workers**

109. As already stated, the bulk of the population live on agriculture; taking the individual workers into consideration in the place of households, the occupational distribution is much more varied. Table No. XXI gives the details of various occupations of workers by sex and community.

Among male workers a great diversity is found. Apart from agricultural classes which constitute a vast majorty of labour force, there are a number of different pursuits. But among women, teachers, dobhy, domestic servants, mid-wife, basket making and Idly selling are the occupations under non-agricultural sector. Forty five per cent of women are agricultural coolies whereas 32.3 per cent of male workers do farm labour on wages.

110. Traditional services like carpentry, goldsmithy, blacksmithy, barber, tapping are carried on by men; only the dhobi's job is shared equally by women in their homes. Educated women working as school teachers number 11, one of them being an instructor in weaving. Basket making, a household industry is the traditional occupation of Kurava women, but those two women do not carry on this job as a regular work. Only on demand they make baskets and sell them for grains. Most of the days they are idle, living mainly on alms given by the villagers. One Valluvar girl is an astrologer and she has learnt this profession from her ancestors. Valluvars are the traditional priests of Parayans. The different occupations of the male and female workers are shown on page No. 71.

TABLE

**Workers classified by**

| Community | Total workers | | Cultivation | | Agricultural labourer | | Teacher | | Business | | Tea-shop | | Dhoby | | Barber | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) |
| [1]dayar | 221 | 151 | 152 | 89 | 60 | 61 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 46 | 37 | 32 | 25 | 12 | 11 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Parayar | 53 | 46 | 2 | 1 | 51 | 45 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | 14 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallar | 15 | 18 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 16 | 4 | 10 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 14 | 7 | 6 | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | ... |
| Vannan | 17 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 | 5 | ... | ... |
| Asari | 18 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyan | 23 | 9 | ... | ... | 23 | 9 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 9 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 9 | 1 | 5 | ... | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslims | 63 | 36 | 53 | 28 | 7 | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Roman Catholics | 343 | 194 | 199 | 97 | 107 | 91 | 15 | 5 | 2 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Protestants | 40 | 27 | 15 | 11 | 13 | 8 | 1 | 4 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| **Total** | 909 | 562 | 504 | 281 | 294 | 253 | 24 | 10 | 8 | 1 | 3 | ... | 16 | 5 | 8 | ... |

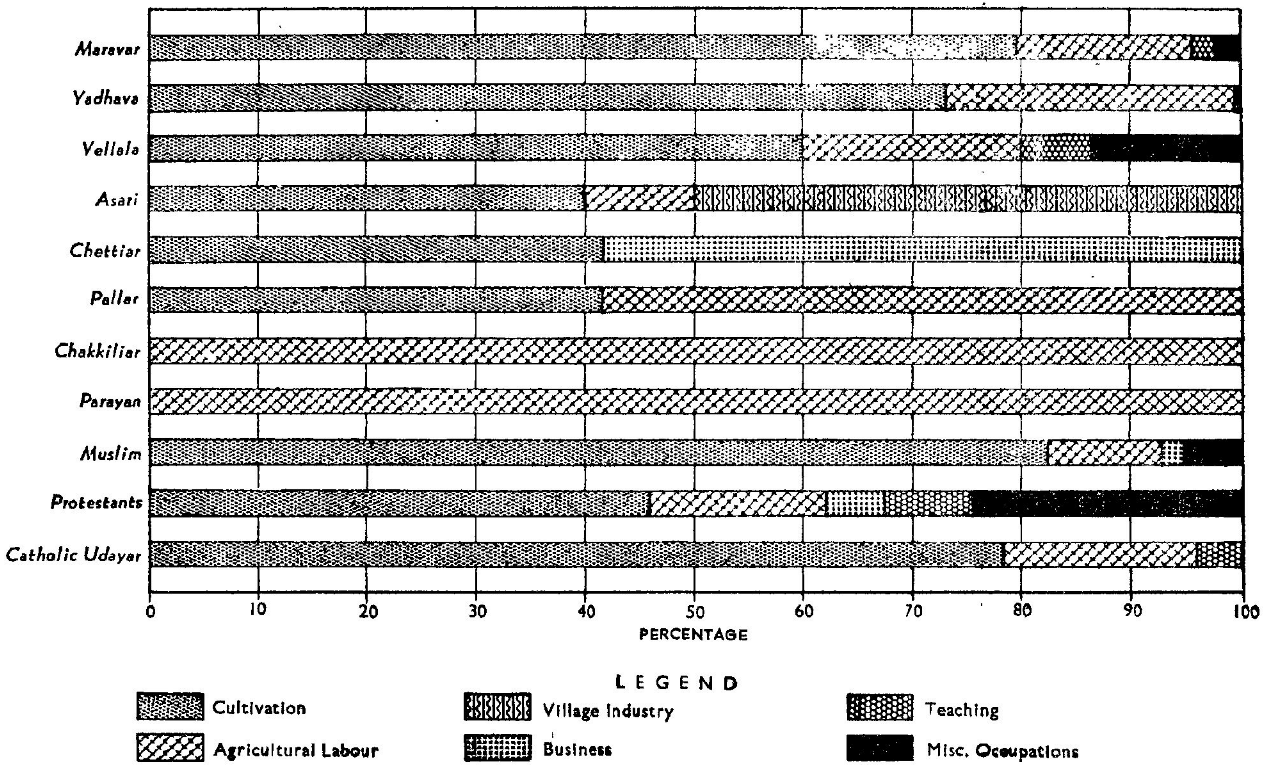
M—Males F—Females

No.' XXI

sex and occupation

| Palmyra tapping | | Blacksmithy | | Goldsmithy | | Carpentry | | Shepherd | | Village official | | Lease cultivator | | Domestic servant | | Astrologer | | Other occupations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| (18) | (19) | (20) | (21) | (22) | (23) | (24) | (25) | (26) | (27) | (28) | (29) | (30) | (31) | (32) | (33) | (34) | (35) | (36) | (37) |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | 3 | ... | 2 | ... | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 7 | 3 |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 7 | 1 |
| 10 | ... | 3 | ... | 2 | ... | 3 | ... | 2 | ... | 1 | ... | 2 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 21 | 6 |

# CASTE AND OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN



| Occupation | No. of workers | |
|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females |
| Cultivator | 504 | 281 |
| Agricultural labourer | 294 | 253 |
| Teacher | 24 | 10 |
| Dhoby | 16 | 5 |
| Palmyra tapping | 10 | ... |
| Business | 8 | 1 |
| Barber | 8 | ... |
| Tea shop | 3 | ... |
| Temple priest | 7 | ... |
| Domestic servant | 7 | 3 |
| Carpenter | 3 | ... |
| Blacksmith | 3 | ... |
| Goldsmith | 2 | ... |
| Lease cultivator | 2 | 2 |
| Village official | 1 | ... |
| Shepherd | 2 | ... |
| Tailor | 2 | ... |
| Peon | 2 | ... |
| Cook | 2 | ... |
| Astrologer | 1 | 1 |
| Watchman | 1 | ... |
| Tea hotel worker | 1 | ... |
| Army man | 1 | ... |
| Post master | 1 | ... |
| Compounder | 1 | ... |
| Hospital assistant | 1 | ... |
| Gardener | 1 | ... |
| School manager | 1 | ... |
| Basket making | ... | 2 |
| Midwife | ... | 2 |
| Rice cake selling | ... | 1 |
| Weaving teacher | ... | 1 |
| Total | 909 | 562 |

### Caste and occupation

111. Castes exercise profound influence in occupational diversification especially in rural parts untouched by urban influences. The traditional arts, crafts and services are followed generation after generation without any shift or diversion. We see in Visavanoor the rich barber family which owns sufficient and still follows their traditional service to the village community, besides looking after cultivation. Caste system exercise much influence in moulding the socio-economic life of a family; occupational distribution social stratification and economic classes are mere derivatives of the caste system. The depressed class people have been assigned some unclean jobs like cleaning the village, flaying and tanning the hides, duties in graveyard, and such other odd jobs which are socially tabooed for other caste Hindus. These jobs are carried on by them, for long periods of time and there is scarcely a breakaway from the traditional services. Table No. XXII furnishes the details of caste-occupations and the number of families following the traditional jobs and number of families acquired different types of other occupations are also shown below. Seldom we see the traditional occupation of one caste is taken up by members of other castes.

### Occupational mobility

112. Practically all the castes except Idayar and Chakkiliyar follow their traditional jobs or professions; no Chakkiliya is now doing leather work and all of them turned into agricultural labourers. Of the 151 Idayar households only 11 are shepherds only one having it as his primary job and 10 others carry on this as their secondary occupation. Among the rest, 103 families are cultivating owners, 36 agricultural coolies and a single soul has taken tailor's job. The other significant shifts in traditional occupation are a teacher from Vannan or washermen community and an agricultural labourer from Asari, the artisan community. The spread of modern education and the growing urbanisation will undoubtedly speed up the occupational mobility. Higher castes like Brahmin, Vellala, Asari and Chettiyar have the aversion or dislike towards jobs like agricultural cooly, tapping etc., as they consider them inferior professions; there may be some variations, but they may be insignificant.

### Diversity of occupation

113. The Table No. XXIII gives us an idea about the types of occupations followed by some of the major communities. Business is the exclusive occupation of Chettiyar caste among Hindus; Muslims and Christians are also engaged. Nobody among Chettiyar, Vannan, Ambattan and Brahmin castes is an agricultural labourer. Tapping is followed by Catholic Nadars or Shanans only and by no other class of people—so is the case with village services like barber and Washerman. Teachers are drawn from educated persons from Vellala, Maravar, Idayar, Brahmin, Vannan, Catholics and Protestant Christians.

## TABLE No. XXII

### Traditional occupation

| Community | Traditional occupation | No. of households having traditional occupation | No. of households with occupation other than traditional occupation: Cultivator | Agr-cultural labourer | Tailor | Teacher | Religious worker |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Idayar | Shepherd | 11 | 103 | 36 | 1 | ... | ... |
| Vannan | Washerman | 11 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Ambattan | Barber | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Asari | Smithy | 4 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| | Carpentry | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | Cultivator | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | Agricultural labourer | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | Business | 8 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | Leather work | ... | ... | 10 | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | Tapping | 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

## TABLE No. XXIII

### Diversity of occupation by communities

| Community | Total No. of workers | Percentage of workers in different occupations: Cultivation | Agricultural labourer | Teacher | Business | Tapping | Smithy and carpentry | Washerman | Barber | Shepherd | Domestic servant | Tailor | Religious worker | Other occupations | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) |
| Idayar | 372 | 64.78 | 32.53 | 0.54 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0.27 | 1.61 | 0.27 | ... | ... | 100.0 |
| Maravar | 83 | 68.68 | 27.72 | 1.20 | ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... | 1.20 | ... | 1.20 | ... | 100.0 |
| Vellala | 20 | 60.00 | 20.00 | 10.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10.00 | 100.0 |
| Chettiyar | 20 | 65.00 | ... | ... | 35.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 100.0 |
| Asari | 25 | 52.00 | 12.00 | ... | ... | ... | 32.00 | ... | ... | ... | 4.00 | ... | ... | ... | 100.0 |
| Brahmin | 3 | 66.67 | ... | 33 33 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 100.0 |
| Vannan | 22 | ... | ... | 4.55 | ... | .. | ... | 95.45 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | .. | 100.0 |
| Ambattan | 21 | 61.90 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 38.10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 100 0 |
| Parayan | 99 | 3.03 | 96.97 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | . | 100.0 |
| Pallan | 33 | 39.39 | 60.61 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | .. | 100.0 |
| Chakkiliyar | 32 | ... | 100.00 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 100.0 |
| Miscellaneous castes | 38 | 39.47 | 39.47 | 5.27 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5.27 | 10.52 | 100.0 |
| Muslims | 99 | 81.82 | 14.14 | ... | 1.01 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1.01 | 2.02 | 100.0 |
| Roman Catholics | 537 | 55.12 | 36.87 | 3.91 | 0.56 | 1.86 | ... | ... | ... | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.38 | 0.76 | 100.0 |
| Protestants | 67 | 38.81 | 31.34 | 7.46 | 2.99 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1.49 | ... | 1.49 | 16.42 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **1,471** | **53.34** | **37.19** | **2.39** | **0.88** | **0.68** | **0.54** | **1.43** | **0.54** | **0.14** | **0.68** | **0.14** | **0.48** | **1.57** | **100.0** |

**Labour force**

114. The proportion of labour force is high in some communities such as Scheduled Castes, Idayar, etc., as normally working population is mainly drawn from such classes. Among advanced castes like Vellala, Chettiyar, Brahmin and Maravar, the incidence of dependents is heavy and the head of household with one or two elder male members will carry on the occupations and support the entire family. Among landless labourers, almost all adult members, male or female, and children as well are working, getting whatever little amount of grains, or money they get as wages. Among Muslim community, the proportion of workers is far less, as Muslim women do not go in for work. In the case of Christians, Catholics mainly drawn from Udayar, Parayar and Pallar castes are noted for manual work in the fields and the average number of workers is somewhat high; but the position is just reverse in respect of Protestant Christians. The statement below indicates the total workers and average number of workers per household for each community.

| Community | No. of workers | | | Average No. of workers per household |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Total | |
| Idayar | 221 | 151 | 372 | 2.46 |
| Maravar | 46 | 37 | 83 | 1.88 |
| Parayar | 53 | 46 | 99 | 3.09 |
| Vellala | 14 | 6 | 20 | 1.33 |
| Vannan | 17 | 5 | 22 | 1.83 |
| Chettiyar | 16 | 4 | 20 | 1.67 |
| Pallar | 15 | 18 | 33 | 2.75 |
| Ambattan | 14 | 7 | 21 | 1.75 |
| Chakkiliyar | 23 | 9 | 32 | 3.20 |
| Asari | 18 | 7 | 25 | 2.50 |
| Agamudiyar | 9 | 7 | 16 | 2.28 |
| Pandaram | 9 | 1 | 10 | 2.50 |
| Panicker | 3 | 3 | 6 | 1.50 |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | 2 | 1.00 |
| Brahmin | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.50 |
| Veduvar | ... | 2 | 2 | 2.00 |
| Valluvar | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2.00 |
| Muslim | 63 | 36 | 99 | 1.55 |
| Roman Catholics | 343 | 194 | 537 | 2.38 |
| Protestants | 40 | 27 | 67 | 1.81 |
| Total | 909 | 562 | 1471 | 2.27 |

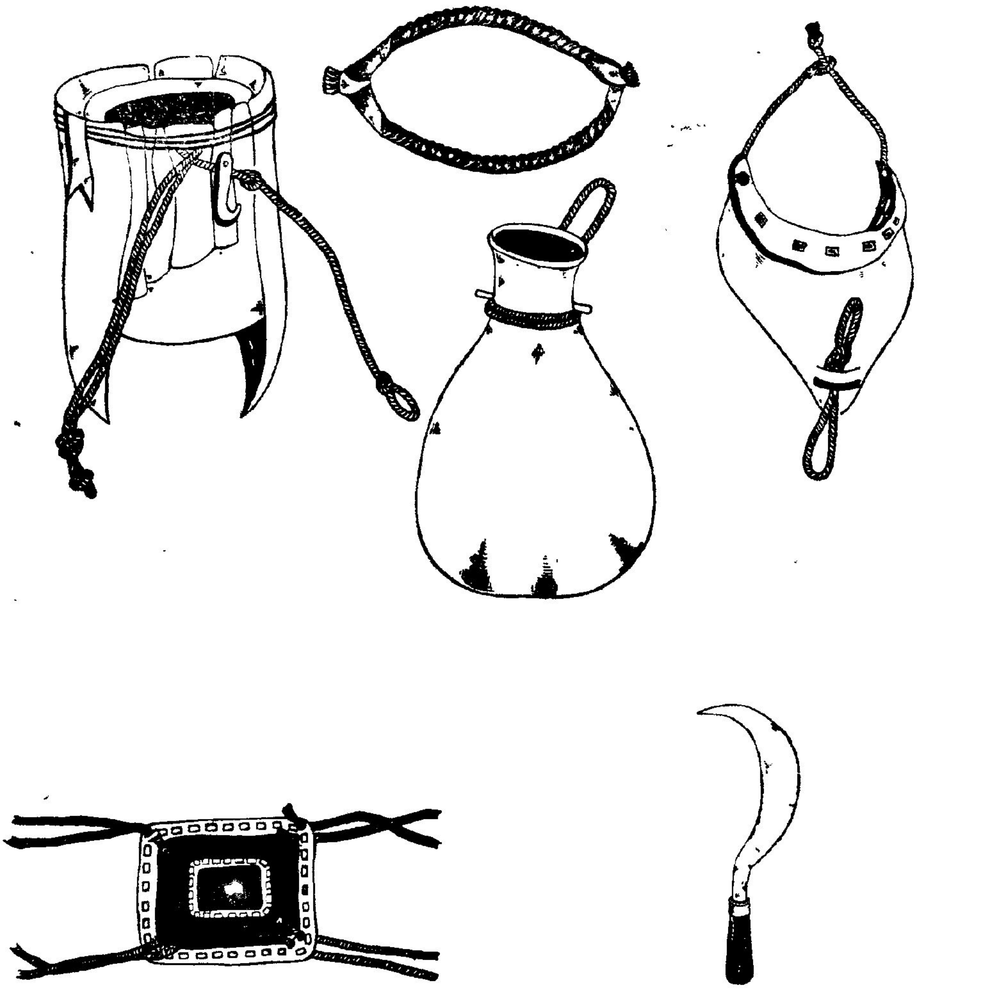
The average number of workers per househlod for all Hindu castes is 2.32, for Muslims 1.55 and 1.81 for Protestants and it is as high as 2.38 among Catholics. In respect of Chakkiliyans, the average number of workers is 3.2 and Parayar ranks next with an average figure of 3.09. Among Pallars, the average works out to 2.75 and it is 2.50 for Asari and Pandaram castes. For Idayars also, the average number of workers per household is high viz., 2.46 and the lowest figure of 1.33 is shown against Vellala. The higher average number of workers among some castes does not mean bright economic conditions; rather the economic standards depend largely upon lands owned and the better employment opportunities.

**Land**

115. The comparative economic prosperity of different communities will be clear by analysing the ownership of land. The particulars given in the following statement reflect the position of some major communities in regard to percentage of landholders and average size of holding per land owning family.

| Community | Total No. of households | No. of households owning land | Percentage | Average size of holding per land-owning household |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Idayar | 151 | 146 | 90.69 | 3.99 |
| Maravar | 44 | 40 | 90.91 | 6.31 |
| Vellala | 15 | 13 | 86.67 | 5.34 |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 9 | 75.00 | 3.33 |
| Parayan | 32 | 3 | 9.38 | 1.67 |
| Muslims | 55 | 48 | 87.27 | 5.48 |
| R.C. Udayar | 97 | 91 | 93.82 | 7.20 |
| R.C. Parayan | 26 | 8 | 30.77 | 0.90 |
| R.C. Nadar | 8 | 7 | 87.50 | 0.94 |
| Protestants | 37 | 27 | 72.97 | 2.79 |

The above facts bear testimony to the relative economic prosperity of major castes in two aspects viz., percentage of land-owning families and average size of land per land-owning family.



Tools used for tapping palmyra

**Subsidiary occupation**

116. People of Visavanoor have no opportunities for earning a little more money by way of subsidiary occupation, in addition to their primary occupation. Majority of population are agriculturists and agriculture is, of course, a way of life rather than an occupation. With whatever little bit of land one has acquired from his father, the peasant is toiling and moiling with his poorfed cattle and age-old implements and thus carrying on his life without any attempt or aspiration for better employment. The farmer is not to be blamed, as even if he aspires, there are no opportunities for him to secure some secondary jobs such as any household industry or business.

**Household industry**

117. Household industry is rarely practised except the traditional village crafts such as carpentry, blacksmithy, goldsmithy or tapping etc. Many a small cultivator finding it hard to make both ends meet with the poor yield in his field, goes in for cooly labour in others' fields. There are 150 such small cultivators who had taken up agricultural cooly as their secondary occupation besides cultivation and one cultivator has taken up teacher's post and four are carrying on small business. Of the five artisans who had carpentry or smithy as their chief occupation, three persons, one carpenter and two blacksmiths have cultivation as their subsidiary occupation. Some agricultural labourers who own very small bits of land have reported to have taken cultivation as their secondary occupation. There are some Chettiyars who have taken up cultivation as subsidiary occupations. Table No. XXIV shows the extent of subsidiary occupation of the different categories of workers.

**Features of agriculture**

118. Agriculture is the mainstay of villagers and it bears all the features of backwardness; the fortunes of the peasant are wholly dependent on the vagaries of seasons and rainfall. The tanks are not fed by any river; *Marukals* from other large tanks are also totally absent. The tanks of Visavanoor entirely depend on the rainfall and as there are no sluice or outlet, water is not conserved at times of floods or heavy supply of water. But, however, people are not assured of monsoon showers in the right seasons; droughts are common and failure of seasonal rains causes distress and famine. Mostly the tanks require two or three fillings, for the crop to mature. Continued rainfall is essential to provide two or three fillings, but rarely this happens. Further, the ayacut of some of the tanks very often happens to be greater than the capacity of the tank itself and they require several fillings. Further the capacity of the tanks has been reduced by the falling in of the bunds and no regular efforts for deepening the tanks have been taken either by the erstwhile zamindari or by the democratic government or by people themselves under what is known as 'Kudimaramathu' system, resulting in reduced supply of water for cultivation. What little water is got from the rainfall is also not properly conserved due to lack of sluices or outlets and improper maintenance. Due to absence of any outlet, it becomes necessary during heavy rainy seasons for the villagers themselves to make opencuts along the bunds, lest the bunds are washed away causing great floods into the village. The construction of Surplus Weir and tank sluices is considered essential by the people.

**Crops**

119. Lack of proper irrigation facilities does not allow proper crop-rotation and larger acreage. Seldom is a second crop of paddy raised; only a few lands close to the tank have double crops, but the villagers hope that if better irrigation facilities are available by improvement of tanks, double crop lands can be extended considerably. Only in the hamlet of Pukkulam, the water scarcity is not so keenly felt and the wet cultivation of paddy is frequently practised by many. The soil of Visavanoor suits the growth of fry paddy and millets like Varagu, Vali, Cumbu etc., and to some extent, pulses and Coriander. Mostly paddy is raised as a single crop and pulses are grown as mixed crop with cotton and varagu. Among cash crops, groundnut is the chief crop, which is however grown sufficiently in a larger areas. Rotation of crops, is rarely observed by the peasants and the system of leaving current fallows, for sowing paddy prevails in Visavanoor. Varagu and horsegram or blackgram are sown as mixed crop and they are harvested at different periods. The crop pattern of the village may be grasped from the data on page 77. By far, paddy is the chief crop covering a major portion of lands in the village; next in importance comes varagu, a millet crop. Some cultivators recently have shifted to Coriander, which is a cash crop but not to larger extent. Gingelly is raised by some cultivators recently.

**Size of holding**

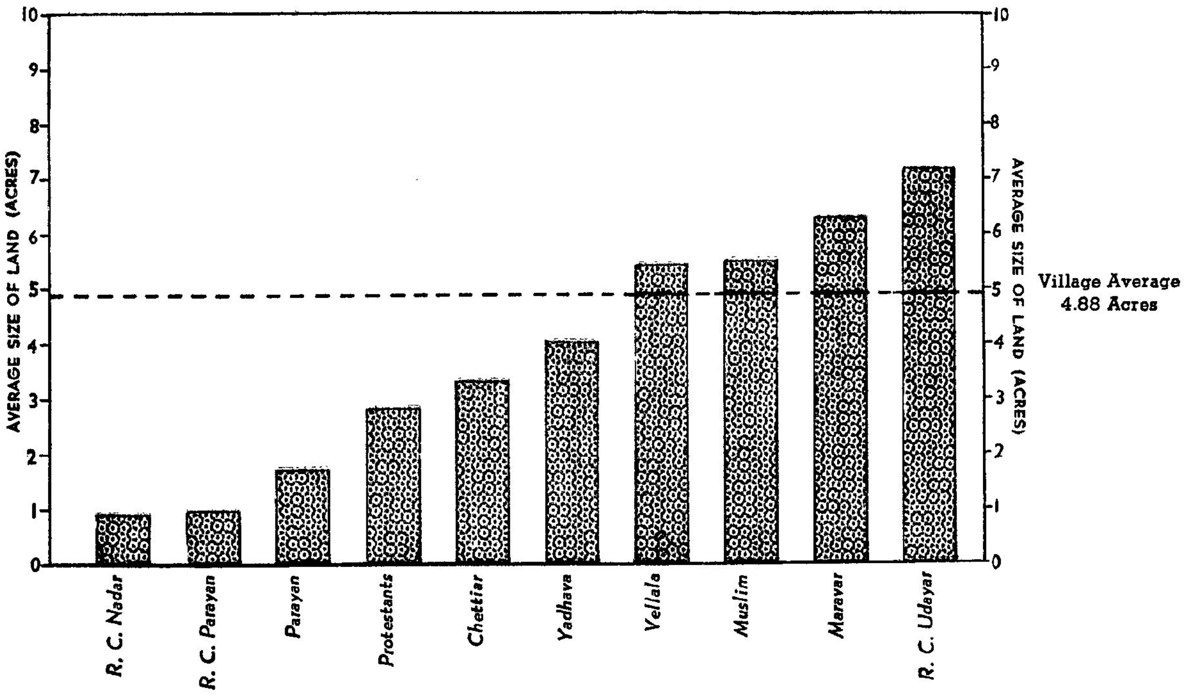
120. The holdings in Visavanoor are generally medium-sized ones. Table No. XXV furnishes details of households owning land, with the extent of land. Of the 649 households 123 households are landless people and 31 families do cultivation as Tenant-cum-owner cultivators. Six are lease cultivators. As many as 50 holdings are large sized ones, exceeding 10 acres and 164 come under the range 5 to 10 acres. Seventy six holdings are having an area less than an acre.

## TABLE No. XXIV

### Subsidiary occupation

| Primary occupation | Total No. of workers | No. of workers having primary occupation only | No. of workers having subsidiary occupation | No. of workers having subsidiary occupation: Cultivation | Agricultural labourer | Teacher | Business | Tea shop | Rice cake selling | Tapping | Religious worker | Mason | Shepherd | Village official | Carpenter | Blacksmith | Barber |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) |
| Religious Worker | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Astrologer | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Midwife | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Hospital Assistant | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Compounder | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Teacher | 34 | 24 | 10 | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Weaving Instructor | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Armyman | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Village Official | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Tea shop | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| School Manager | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Peon | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Business | 9 | 5 | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Cultivator | 785 | 607 | 178 | ... | 150 | 1 | 3 | 1 | ... | 3 | ... | 3 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| Lease Cultivator | 4 | 3 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Shepherd | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Gardener | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Tapping | 10 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agricultural labourer | 547 | 414 | 133 | 124 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | 3 | 1 | 1 | ... | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Post Master | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Tailor | 2 | ... | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Blacksmith | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Goldsmith | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Carpenter | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Rice cake selling | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Mat weaving | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Watchman | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Cook | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Servant | 10 | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Hotel server | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Barber | 8 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Dhoby | 21 | 19 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| **Total** | 1,471 | 1,119 | 352 | 160 | 154 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 |

# AVERAGE SIZE OF HOLDING



## Crop statistics

### Total extent under different crops

| Fasli year | Paddy | Varagu | Ragi | Cumbu | Chillies | Vali | Cotton | Horse gram | Fodder Cholam | Plantain | Black gram | Cholum | Gingelly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. | Acs.cts. |
| 1359 | 1012.17 | ... | 112.39 | 39.65 | 13.32 | 12.68 | 6.18 | ... | 1.02 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1360 | 264.20 | 261.21 | 98.48 | 0.59 | 18 46 | 2.06 | 12.24 | ... | 2.10 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1361 | 263.70 | 742.46 | 202.44 | 586.22 | 45.34 | 73.63 | 17.12 | ... | 5.03 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1362 | 473.42 | 1076.29 | 485.68 | 162.18 | 39.33 | 48.63 | 10.19 | 10.45 | 7.13 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1363 | 1118.25 | ... | 88.02 | 317.62 | 28.37 | 52.27 | 11.65 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1364 | 1016.25 | 830.24 | 199.39 | 43.82 | 100.25 | 56.21 | 19.75 | 16.17 | 4.02 | 0.93 | ... | ... | ... |
| 1365 | 965.08 | 532.38 | 98.48 | 113.78 | 45.34 | 73.63 | 17.12 | ... | 5.03 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1366 | 764.18 | ... | 98.48 | 28.09 | 18.46 | 12.42 | 12.24 | ... | 2.10 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1367 | 1118.38 | — | 412.65 | 15.19 | 115.22 | 48.63 | 4.03 | ... | 7.15 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 1368 | 1633.38 | 897.64 | 318.12 | 25.07 | 142.82 | 56.47 | 11.18 | 27.27 | 6.75 | 0.98 | 1.45 | 24.02 | ... |
| 1369 | 1231.15 | 798.38 | 192.58 | 340.13 | 167.35 | 59.42 | 60.24 | 14.88 | ... | 1.20 | ... | ... | 137.3 |

TABLE No. XXV

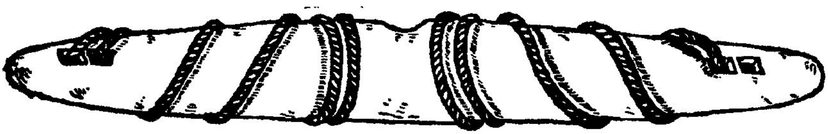
### Possession of land

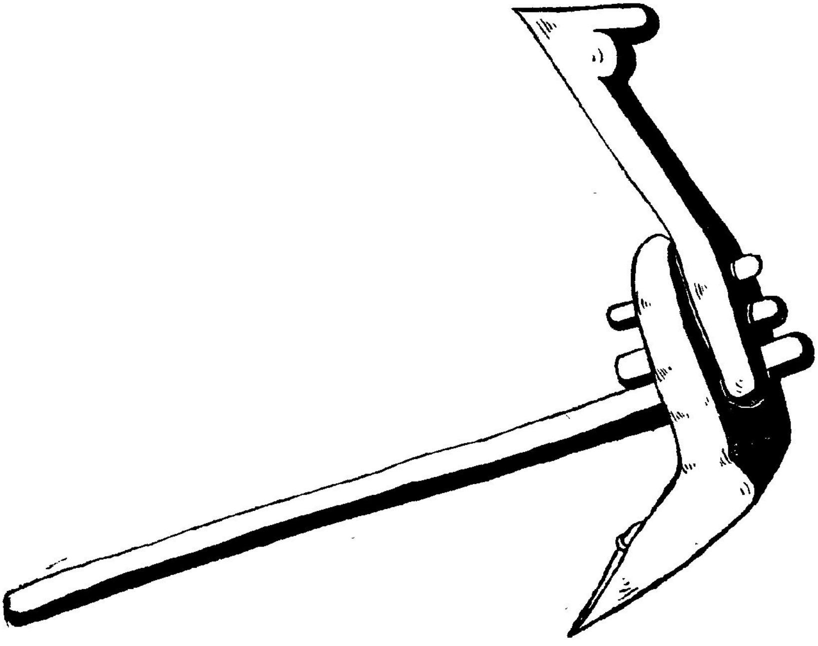
| Name of interest on land | No. of households and extent of land: No land | 5 cents and below | 6 to 10 cents | 11 to 20 cents | 21 to 50 cents | 51 cents to 1 acre | 1.1 to 2.49 acres | 2.50 to 4.99 acres | 5 to 10 acres | 10 and above | Total No. of households |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| Land owned | ... | ... | ... | ... | 20 | 54 | 89 | 128 | 147 | 50 | 488 |
| Land held direct from Government under a tenure less substancial than ownership | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Land held from private persons or institution | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | ... | ... | 6 |
| Land given out to private persons or institution | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Land owned & taken on lease | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 12 | 16 | ... | 31 |
| No land | 123 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 123 |
| Total | 123 | ... | ... | ... | 21 | 55 | 102 | 143 | 164 | 50 | 649 |

## Agricultural implements

121. The farming equipments of the peasants of Visavanoor are primitive and antiquated and they are mostly uneconomic. Only one enlightened cultivator in the hamlet of Pukkulam is using iron plough and no other agriculturists own any sort of improved agricultural tools. There are only 27 bullock-carts used as means of transport and small cultivators who cannot afford to own a cart and pair of bullocks very often carry manures as head loads and in harvest seasons, poor farmers carry harvested produce home by head loads. The wooden plough continues to be the chief instrument of the peasant. The ploughs are very small in size and the iron blade, commonly known as *Kozhu* is not sufficiently long and pointed. The country plough consists of two rude sticks with an iron spike at the end, which constitutes the share. This he guides with one hand, while the other he guides the bullocks and makes a rut or scratch in the field. The

**Agricultural implements**





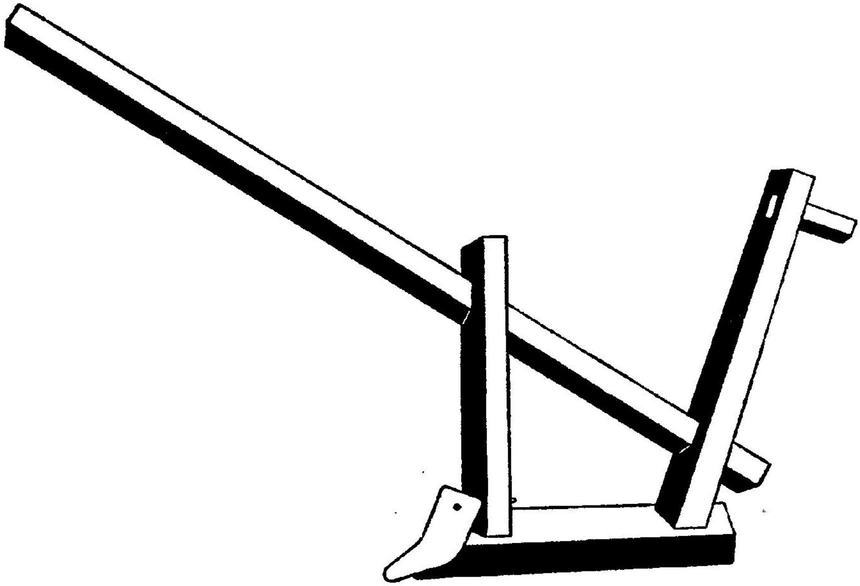
The country plough

Transplantation of paddy

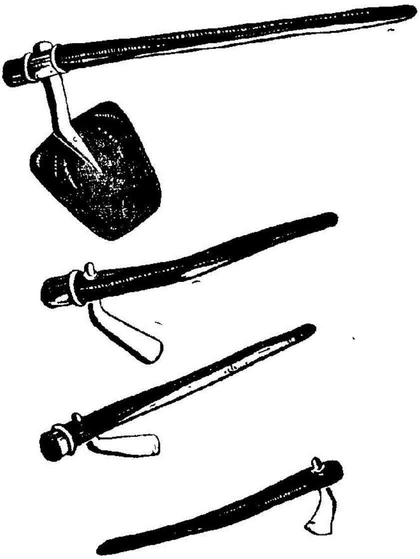
The farmer's wife [illegible] in transplantation of paddy.

Agricultural operations by women coolies

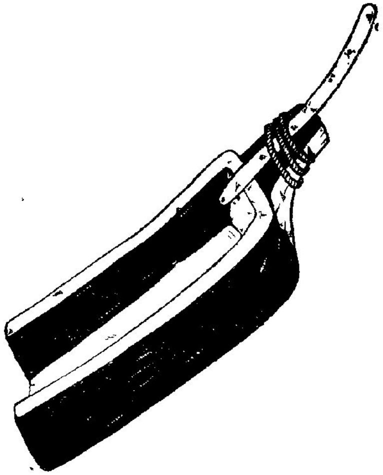
Agricultural implements (Contd.)



Bose plough

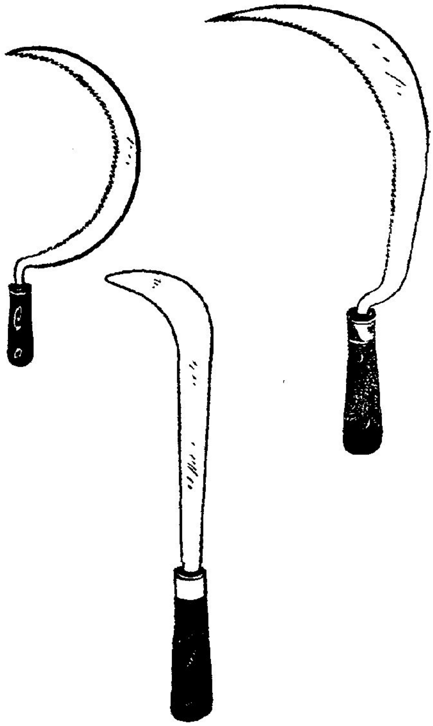


Spade and weeders

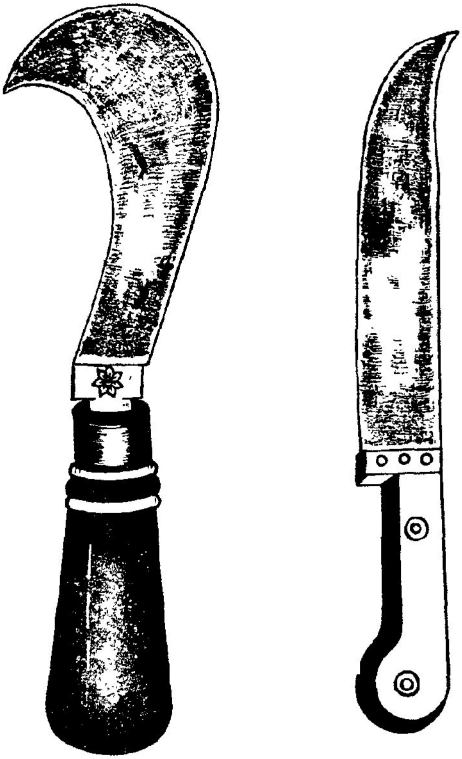


Eravai Maram—An instrument to draw water

**Agricultural implements (Contd.)**



Scythes and bill hook



Bill hooks

*Manvetti* or spade is the same old type, used for digging the earth; *Kalaikottu* is a miniature spade used for weeding. A farmer's stock-in-trade usually consists of one country plough, one spade, one *Pannaruval* or reaping hook and two or three *Kalaikottus*—weeding tools. Agricultural labourer possesses only the reaping hook and seldom he owns other types of tool, which he cannot afford to make or to purchase. The following figures reveal the extent of possession in various agricultural implements.

| Type of implement | No. of households possessing the implements | Percentage to total No. of households |
|---|---|---|
| Wooden plough | 339 | 52.23 |
| Bose plough | 1 | 0.15 |
| Manvetti | 511 | 78.74 |
| Arival | 558 | 85.98 |
| Big Arival | 1 | 0.15 |
| Kalaikottu | 427 | 65.79 |
| Kodali or axe | 48 | 7.40 |
| Cart | 27 | 4.16 |
| Eravaimaram | 6 | 0.94 |
| Crow bar | 4 | 0.62 |
| Parambu | 1 | 0.15 |
| Without any implements | 82 | 12.63 |

**Manures**

122. The very backwardness of cultivation together with the poverty makes the poor peasants less enthusiastic in the cultivation and only very few farmers use manures of good quality and fertilizers of modern type. A majority of peasants are satisfied with the green leaves available in the near vicinity and the cattle manure collected locally. Green manuring is an effective method of enriching the soil and the peasants doubtlessly know this truth, but they cannot afford to procure good varieties of green leaves from distant places. Local green manures which are of inferior quality are frequently used by a majority of cultivators. The cotton plants or blackgram plants which are left out after harvest are ploughed back into the field to enrich the soil and several cultivators are generally content with this indigenous way of enriching the soil in their fields. The value of compost manure is not well understood by the villagers and compost pits are few and far between. Most of the cow dung in the village goes to fuel purposes and not for manuring the fields. Use of improved chemical fertilizers is a thing unknown to most of the ryots and efforts to promote adoption of such fertilizers like Ammonium Sulphate, Super-phosphate, Urea, bone meal, etc., have not been done so far by the development organisations. Out of 507 cultivator households, only 103 households adopt better manure.

**Agricultural practices**

123. Mostly dry cultivation is practised in raising paddy, millets or pulses whatever it may be. Agricultural practices are not very different from the practices obtaining elsewhere in this region. As observed earlier, agriculture is quite uneconomic; as all the lands belonged to the zamindari till recently, the farmers did little to conserve or enrich the soil, and seldom the peasants take to composting in their fields, barring some enlightened persons. Japanese method of paddy cultivation is a thing unheard of in this poor little world! No demonstration plots have been laid either by the agricultural staff or extension staff of the new Block Development Organisation. Improved seeds are seldom distributed to the ryots by the Governmental agencies nor the peasants of this village care to go over to Ilayangudi to obtain improved strains of seed: Only a few enlightened cultivators have adopted these seeds and the results are said to be not spectacular due to various handicaps of poor soil, uncertain weather etc., but these trials are anyway, watched by other ryots. Unless large scale demonstration plots are laid out before the very eyes of the villagers, they would not go in for improved type of seeds. Due to lack of improved methods of cultivation, absence of modern strains of seed and soil enrichers and the limited water supply, the productivity of land continues to be very low.

**Pests**

124. Besides the poor fertility of soil, non-use of improved types of agricultural practices, peasants suffer terrible loss of out-turn by frequent pest attack in their paddy fields. *Surai*, a kind of crop disease is widely prevalent, causing much destruction of crops, very often complete withering away of the plants. It is said that due to excess of sun's scorches and immediate rains, Surai creeps in, at the root of the paddy plant and root becomes white and the crop slowly dies before bearing grains. The peasants suffer heavy loss of crops due to Surai attack and no pesticides for this disease are within their easy reach.

**Livestock**

125. Predominantly agricultural in character, Visavanoor has only a cattle population of 1515, consisting of 742 bulls, 145 cows, 30 buffaloes, 584 sheep, 13 donkeys and one goat, according to the Livestock Census of 1961. The first impression one would get from a casual observation of the cattle of Visavanoor is the miserably poor quality of bulls and bullocks. The bullocks are, as a rule, of inferior local breed and a pair of bulls, on an average, costs Rs. 200 or Rs. 300. Only a few selected cultivators own somewhat a good type of bulls for their agricultural operation and an average pair of bulls may be worth of Rs. 500—Rs. 1000. Not even a single household possesses an improved breed. The milch cattle are also of ordinary local breed and the average yield of milk of cow is roughly half Madras Measure and a buffalo yields milk of about three-fourths of a Madras Measure or scarcely one Madras Measure. The milk supply of cows and buffaloes is quite inadequate, for such a large village; the milk yield is low for the following reasons:

i) The breed is very poor and an ordinary one.

ii) Grazing land is scarce and fodder scarcity is accute.

iii) Care and management of cattle is very unsatisfactory.

The people do not feed or pay sufficient attention to cows and are left to themselves to graze anywhere in and around the village. As this region is quite dry, it is but natural that cows remain semi-starved in most part of the year.

**Cattle statistics**

126. The following figures reveal the different types of cattle population according to Cattle Census 1961.

| Type of cattle | Total No. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| BULLS | | |
| 3 years and below | 79 | |
| Over 3 years | 663 | |
| Total | 742 | 48.98 |
| COWS | | |
| 3 years and below | 50 | |
| Over 3 years | 95 | |
| Total | 145 | 9.57 |
| HE-BUFFALOES | | |
| 3 years and below | 3 | |
| Over 3 years | 13 | |
| Total | 16 | 1.06 |
| SHE-BUFFALOES | | |
| 3 years and below | 3 | |
| Over 3 years | 11 | |
| Total | 14 | 0.92 |
| Sheep | 584 | 38.54 |
| Goat | 1 | 0.07 |
| Donkeys | 13 | 0.86 |
| Total | 1515 | 100.00 |

Sometimes, certain less prosperous cultivators who cannot afford to own a pair of bullocks, employ buffaloes for ploughing their fields. Possession of good bulls is, of course, an asset among the cultivators as they provide the chief working force for the cultivation. About 41 per cent of households are having bulls or bullocks, while 21 per cent of households own cow in their houses. Possession of goats, sheep etc., is rare and hen is commonly found in as many as 407 households. Table No XXVI discloses the position in regard to keeping cattle and poultry by different communities.

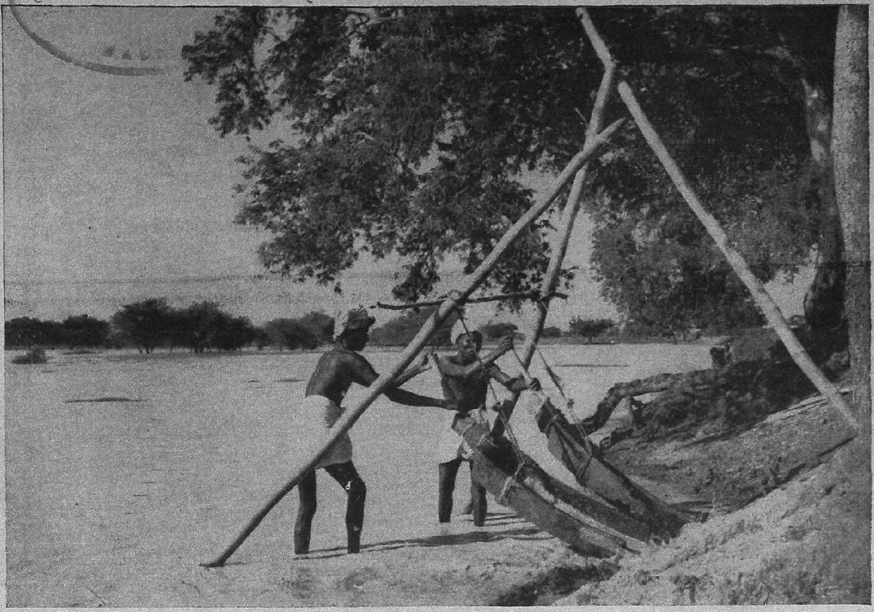
**Income**

127. The general economic conditions are well reflected in the income levels of people. The monthly income of a vast majority of labour class ranges from Rs. 25 to 50 and the family income of a owner cultivator is very often Rs. 75 and a bit high. Table No XXVII gives the reader an idea, how the families are distributed among the various income groups. Of 374 cultivating households there are 138 households having income between Rs. 51 and 75 and only there are 57 families deriving an income exceeding Rs. 100. In respect of landless labour class, we see a large concentration in the income group Rs. 26-50 and as many as 18 families thrive on an income of Rs. 25 or less in a month. The pathetic economic standards of the labour class can very well be imagined; 17.3 per cent of households earn below Rs. 50 in a month. In respect of other classes of people, the family income generally range from Rs. 26 to Rs. 75 and only 17 families in all earn more than Rs. 100.

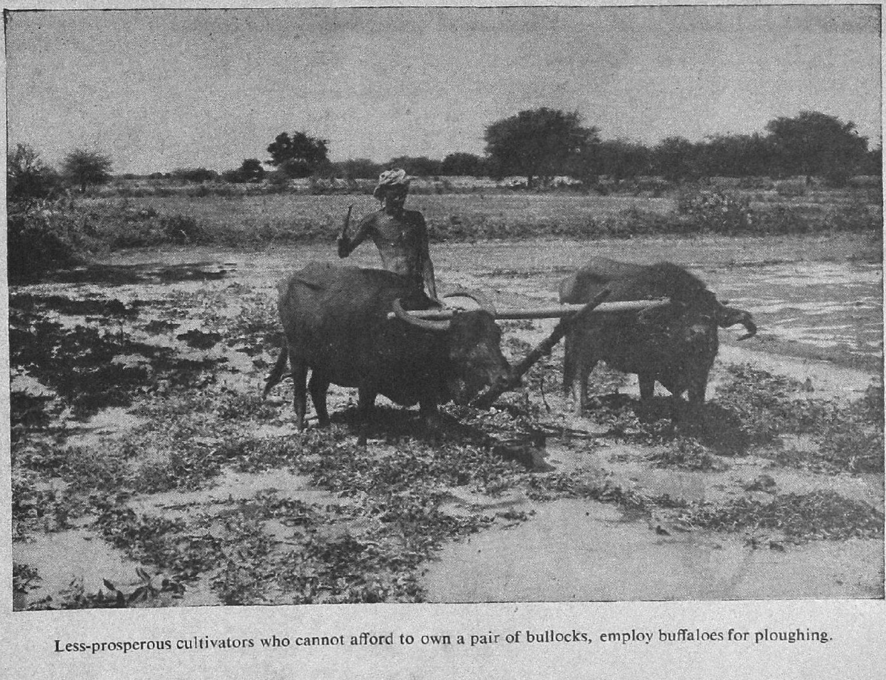
**Per capita income**

128. The individual income of an agricultural labourer is miserably low. As the general agricultural conditions are not prosperous, it is but natural that the agricultural wages fall below the normal standards. In addition to the low wages, the labourer has to remain without employment for several months in a year. Only in the ploughing, sowing, weeding and harvesting seasons, agricultural coolies are able to find work and the rest part of the year is simply wasted. The per capita income of the cultivator as well as non-agricultural class is also not encouraging. The following statement classifies the persons with reference to their individual incomes, leave alone their family workers

| Major occupations | No. of workers | Total income Rs. | Per capita income Rs.nP. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cultivator | 785 | 26,939 | 34.22 |
| Agricultural labourer | 547 | 11,539 | 21.09 |
| Others | 139 | 6,537 | 47.03 |
| Village Total | 1,471 | 45,015 | 30.61 |



Drawing of water for irrigating wet paddy with Eravai Maram



Less-prosperous cultivators who cannot afford to own a pair of bullocks, employ buffaloes for ploughing.

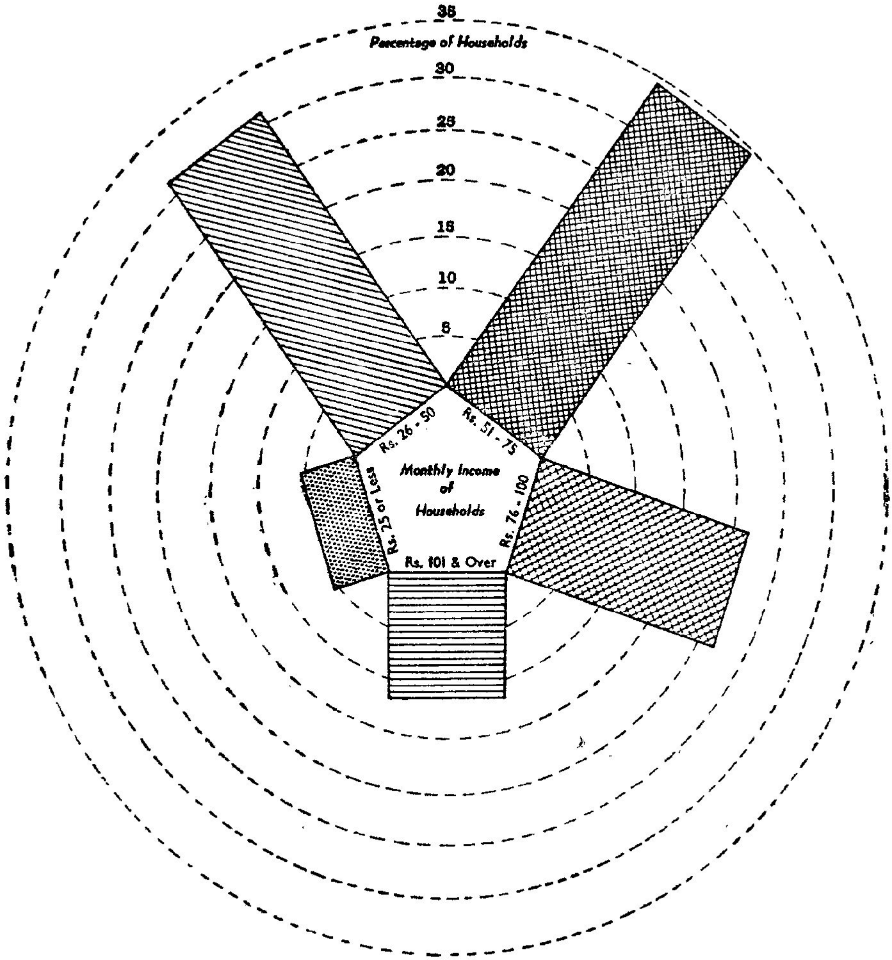
Agricultural operations (Threshing of cotton)

## TABLE No. XVI

### Livestock

| Community | Cows: No. of households owning | Cows: Total No. | Buffaloes: No. of households owning | Buffaloes: Total No. | Calves: No. of households owning | Calves: Total No. | Bulls: No. of households owning | Bulls: Total No. | Bullocks: No. of households owning | Bullocks: Total No. | Goat/Sheep: No. of households owning | Goat/Sheep: Total No. | Cock: No. of households owning | Cock: Total No. | Hens: No. of households owning | Hens: Total No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) |
| Idayar | 59 | 112 | 7 | 18 | 22 | 24 | 85 | 162 | 11 | 19 | 46 | 603 | 13 | 17 | 120 | 222 |
| Maravar | 10 | 12 | ... | ... | 5 | 5 | 17 | 31 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 75 | 9 | 12 | 22 | 65 |
| Parayan | 7 | 7 | ... | ... | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 29 |
| Vellala | 1 | 3 | ... | ... | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 14 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 14 |
| Pallan | 3 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 6 | 9 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 9 |
| Chettiyar | 3 | 3 | ... | ... | 3 | 3 | 5 | 9 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | 4 | 10 |
| Ambattan | 3 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| Vannan | 2 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 7 | 16 |
| Asari | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Chakkiliyar | 2 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 5 | 8 | 16 |
| Agamudiyar | 2 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| Pandaram | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 4 |
| Panicker | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslims | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 55 |
| Roman Catholics | 63 | 87 | ... | ... | 16 | 23 | 116 | 226 | 20 | 36 | 24 | 168 | 56 | 74 | 160 | 380 |
| Protestants | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 28 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 24 | 71 |
| Total | 167 | 255 | 8 | 19 | 61 | 71 | 263 | 499 | 51 | 92 | 86 | 871 | 98 | 129 | 407 | 917 |

## MONTHLY INCOME



assisting them in their work. The per capita income of a cultivator works out to Rs. 34.32 per month, while an agricultural cooly earns, on an average, Rs. 21.09 only. The per capita income of the rest of the people comes to Rs. 47.03. With these low income levels, the villagers toil for a subsistence living and their miserable conditions can well be imagined than explained. The per capita earning for an individual worker, on the whole comes to Rs. 30.61.

**Income levels of communities**

129. The income of a family in rural parts depends more on land-ownership, than any other factor. Landless labour classes derive a poor wage and thereby the income levels of Scheduled Castes and Pandaram etc. remain very low. The great amount of diversity in the average income per household among the various communities can well be seen from the statement below.

| Community | No. of households | Total income | Average income per household |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rs. | Rs. P. |
| Maravar | 44 | 3,178 | 72-23 |
| Asari | 10 | 685 | 68-50 |
| Ambattan | 12 | 828 | 68-33 |
| Idayar | 151 | 10,222 | 67-70 |
| Vellala | 15 | 993 | 66-20 |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 720 | 60-00 |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 415 | 59-29 |
| Pandaram | 4 | 230 | 57-50 |
| Parayan | 32 | 1,755 | 54-84 |
| Pallar | 12 | 658 | 54-83 |
| Vannan | 12 | 650 | 54-17 |
| Panicker | 4 | 180 | 45-00 |
| Chakkiliyan | 10 | 540 | 54-00 |
| Miscellaneous castes | 6 | 531 | 88-50 |
| **All Hindus** | **331** | **21,585** | **65-21** |
| Muslims | 55 | 3,975 | 72-27 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 17,380 | 76-80 |
| Protestants | 37 | 2,692 | 72-76 |
| **Village Total** | **649** | **45,632** | **70-31** |

**TABLE No. XXVII**

**Monthly income of households by occupation**

| Household occupation | No. of households in the income range of | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rs. 25 or less | Rs. 26-50 | Rs. 51-75 | Rs. 76-101 | Rs. 100 & over |
| Cultivation | 3 | 86 | 138 | 90 | 57 |
| Agricultural labourer | 18 | 95 | 65 | 13 | 2 |
| Blacksmith | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... |
| Goldsmith | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Carpenter | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... |
| Barber | 1 | 3 | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Teacher | ... | ... | 2 | 6 | 11 |
| Business | 1 | 3 | 3 | ... | ... |
| Temple priest | 1 | 3 | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Astrologer | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Dhoby | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | ... |
| Mat weaving | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Village Official | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Peon | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... |
| Tailor | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... |
| Tea shop | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... |
| Lease cultivation | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Watchman | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Midwife | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Post man | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Rice cake selling | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Army man | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Hospital Assistant | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Compounder | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| School Manager | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Gardener | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Tapping | ... | 3 | 4 | ... | ... |
| **Total** | **28** | **207** | **226** | **112** | **76** |

TABLE

Cumulative frequency

| Income group (Rs. per month) | Idayar: Cumulative total No. of households | Idayar: Cumulative Percentage | Maravar: Cumulative total No. of households | Maravar: Cumulative Percentage | Chettiyar: Cumulative total No. of households | Chettiyar: Cumulative Percentage | Vellala: Cumulative total No. of households | Vellala: Cumulative Percentage | Parayan: Cumulative total No. of households | Parayan: Cumulative Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| 25 or less | 6 | 3.97 | 1 | 2.27 | 1 | 8.33 | 2 | 13.33 | 2 | 6.25 |
| 26 — 50 | 56 | 36.99 | 9 | 20.45 | 6 | 50.00 | 6 | 40.00 | 16 | 50.00 |
| 51 — 75 | 110 | 72.85 | 28 | 63.64 | 10 | 83.33 | 11 | 73.33 | 29 | 90.63 |
| 76 — 100 | 136 | 90.07 | 39 | 88.64 | 12 | 100.00 | 13 | 86.97 | 31 | 96.88 |
| 101 and over | 151 | 100.00 | 44 | 100.00 | 12 | 100.00 | 15 | 100.00 | 32 | 100.00 |

Among the various religious groups, Hindus are relatively poorer, the average income per household being Rs 62.21 nP; Muslims get more income and the average works out to Rs. 72.27 and the money received periodically from the male members working in overseas countries is also included. The average income for Catholics is Rs.76.30 per household, mostly because of the economic prosperity of Udayars.

### Disparity of income

130. Within the Hindu castes a large variation is seen and the average income of Maravars is the highest viz., 72.23 and the artisan caste Asari is ranked next. It is to be noted that the average size of holding per land holder among Maravars was the highest viz., 6.31 acres. The average income level for the inferior castes is far below the average for all Hindu castes. The average family income for village as a whole is Rs. 70.31 nP. The cumulative frequency of household income levels are as shown above.

| Income range (Rs. per month) | Cumulative Total number of households | Cumulative percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 25 or less | 28 | 4.3 |
| 26 — 50 | 235 | 36.2 |
| 51 — 75 | 461 | 71.0 |
| 76 — 100 | 573 | 88.3 |
| 101 and over | 649 | 100.0 |

It is clearly seen that 36.2 per cent of households earn Rs. 50 or less in a month; the cumulative percentage of families earning maximum of Rs. 75 is 71 which indicates that only 29 per cent of households earn incomes exceeding Rs. 75. The cumulative percentages for various income levels vary from community to community. Among Maravars, about 64 per cent of families earn Rs. 75 per month or below, as high as 91 per cent of Parayan families come under this limit of Rs. 75 per month. Among Parayans, 50 per cent of families have their income to a maximum of Rs. 50 per month; but among Chakkiliyans, in the

No. XXVIII

of income

| Pallan | | Chakkiliyar | | Muslims | | Protestant Christians | | Roman Catholics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cumulative total No. of households | Cumulative Percentage | Cumulative total No. of households | Cumulative Percentage | Cumulative total No. of households | Cumulative Percentage | Cumulative total No. of households | Cumulative Percentage | Cumulative total No. of households | Cumulative Percentage |
| (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) | (19) | (20) | (21) |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 5.45 | 1 | 2.70 | 8 | 3.54 |
| 7 | 58.33 | 8 | 80.00 | 13 | 23.64 | 14 | 37.84 | 78 | 34.51 |
| 11 | 91.67 | 8 | 80.00 | 37 | 67.27 | 29 | 78.38 | 149 | 65.93 |
| 12 | 100.00 | 9 | 90.00 | 47 | 85.45 | 33 | 89.19 | 191 | 84.51 |
| 12 | 100.00 | 10 | 100.00 | 55 | 100.00 | 37 | 100.00 | 226 | 100.00 |

lowest social ladder, 80 per cent of households come under this category. For Maravars, only 20 per cent of households are having income below Rs. 50/-and most of them fall under the category Rs. 51-75. The relative prosperity of major Hindu castes, Muslims Protestants and Catholics is clearly seen from Table No. XXVIII.

**Expenditure pattern**

131. The pattern of expenditure of the people of different occupational groups is clearly brought out by Table No XXIX. The expenditure has been classified under major heads viz., food, clothing, education fuel, lighting, luxuries and miscellaneous items and the average expenditure per household works out to Rs. 62.30 per month. It is but natural that the trend of expenditure goes with the level of income. The average monthly expenditure per household according to the different income ranges is shown in the Table No. XXIX. A regular increasing trend in expenditure is noticed with the increasing income levels. However, the method of spending may vary between families of high incomes and those of poor incomes. It is a matter of common experience that a poor agricultural cooly with his meagre income spends a major part of his earning for food only and his spending for clothing will be proportionately less compared to a rich cultivator. With the increasing incomes, the proportions of expenditure spent on items like clothing, education etc., is becoming higher.

**Food**

132. The following figures bear testimony for the trend in expenditure pattern of people of different income ranges. The total expenditure on food and its proportion to total expenditure spent on all items are shown separately for each income groups and for the whole village. Poor people of monthly income of Rs. 25 or below, spend on an average, 64.2 per cent of their total expenditure for food and this proportion increases to 68.4 per cent in the next income range of Rs. 26.50 and then it steadily declines to 53.26 per cent for the higher income group of Rs. 101 and over. The people of higher income group spend much amount on education and clothing.

TABLE No. XXIX

**Average monthly expenditure per household by income groups**

| Item of expenditure | All households: No. of households | All households: Average expenditure per household | Percentage of expenditure on food and other items: Total expenditure | Percentage of expenditure on food and other items: Percentage | Rs. 25 or less: No. of households | Rs. 25 or less: Average expenditure | Rs. 26—50: No. of households | Rs. 26—50: Average expenditure | Rs. 51—75: No. of households | Rs. 51—75: Average expenditure | Rs. 76—100: No. of households | Rs. 76—100: Average expenditure | Rs. 101 and over: No. of households | Rs. 101 and over: Average expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) |
| Food | 646 | 38.48 | 24,858.00 | 16.57 | 25 | 14.48 | 207 | 30.97 | 226 | 29.51 | 112 | 42.43 | 76 | 57.95 |
| Education | 273 | 1.46 | 398.87 | 0.99 | 4 | 0.50 | 68 | 0.81 | 96 | 1.52 | 59 | 0.91 | 46 | 3.09 |
| Clothing | 649 | 9.53 | 6,188.00 | 15.32 | 28 | 3.18 | 207 | 5.84 | 226 | 9.00 | 112 | 12.36 | 76 | 19.35 |
| Fuel | 128 | 5.14 | 658.00 | 1.63 | ... | ... | 13 | 3.17 | 33 | 3.52 | 33 | 5.30 | 49 | 6.67 |
| Lighting | 644 | 2.24 | 1,444.00 | 3.58 | 27 | 0.91 | 204 | 1.64 | 226 | 2.56 | 111 | 2.38 | 76 | 3.17 |
| Luxuries | 612 | 4.36 | 2,670.44 | 6.62 | 27 | 2.18 | 189 | 3.16 | 218 | 4.42 | 106 | 4.77 | 72 | 7.57 |
| Others | 559 | 7.43 | 4,154.00 | 10.29 | 11 | 2.45 | 162 | 4.48 | 204 | 6.25 | 106 | 9.31 | 76 | 14.97 |
| Total | 648 | 62.30 | 40,371.31 | 100.00 | 28 | 20.13 | 207 | 45.28 | 226 | 62.14 | 112 | 72.53 | 76 | 108.78 |

**Clothing**

133. The percentage of expenditure spent on clothing by the families of various income groups are as follows :

| Income group (Rs. per month) | Total expenditure on clothing (Rs.) | Percentage to total expenditure |
|---|---|---|
| 25 or less | 89.00 | 15.79 |
| 26—50 | 1,208.00 | 12.89 |
| 51—75 | 2,035.00 | 14.49 |
| 76—100 | 1,385.00 | 17.05 |
| 101 and over | 1,471.00 | 17.79 |
| Total | 6,188.00 | 15.32 |

The average expenditure spent on clothing by a family works out to Rs. 9.53 nP, while in the poorer section of the society a family spends on an average Rs. 3.18 per month.

**Fuel**

134. Fuel never poses a problem in villages and poor people do not spend on fuel at all. All the 28 households with income less than Rs. 25 have spent nothing on fuel. The average expenditure spent on fuel by the families of various income levels is given below.

| Household income (Rs. per month) | Total No. of households | No. of households spending on fuel | Average expenditure per month Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 or less | 28 | ... | ... |
| 26—50 | 207 | 13 | 3.07 |
| 51—75 | 226 | 33 | 3.52 |
| 76—100 | 112 | 33 | 5.30 |
| 101 and over | 76 | 49 | 6.37 |
| Total | 649 | 128 | 5.14 |

TABLE No. XXX

**Expenditure on food**

| Income group (Rupees per month) | Number of households | Expenditure on food (Rupees) | Total expenditure on all items (Rupees) | Percentage of expenditure on food to total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 or less | 28 | 362 | 563.50 | 64.24 |
| 26—50 | 207 | 6,411 | 9,372.82 | 68.40 |
| 51—75 | 226 | 8,929 | 14,043.95 | 63.58 |
| 76—100 | 112 | 4,752 | 8,122.85 | 58.50 |
| 101 and over | 76 | 4,404 | 8,268.19 | 53.26 |
| All income groups | 649 | 24,858 | 40,371.31 | 61.57 |

**Luxuries**

135. Expenditure on luxuries includes money spent on coffee, tea, *pan supari*, tobacco etc., and this item of expenditure is more commonly spent by people of good economic prosperity as well as poor folk. The number of households spending money on such items and the average expenditure per household, for various income ranges are given below, which are self-explanatory.

| Monthly income (Rs.) | Total No. of households | No. of households spending on luxuries | Average expenditure per month Rs.nP. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 or less | 28 | 27 | 2.18 |
| 26—50 | 207 | 189 | 3.16 |
| 51—75 | 226 | 218 | 4.42 |
| 76—100 | 112 | 106 | 4.77 |
| 101 and over | 76 | 72 | 7.57 |
| Total | 649 | 612 | 4.36 |

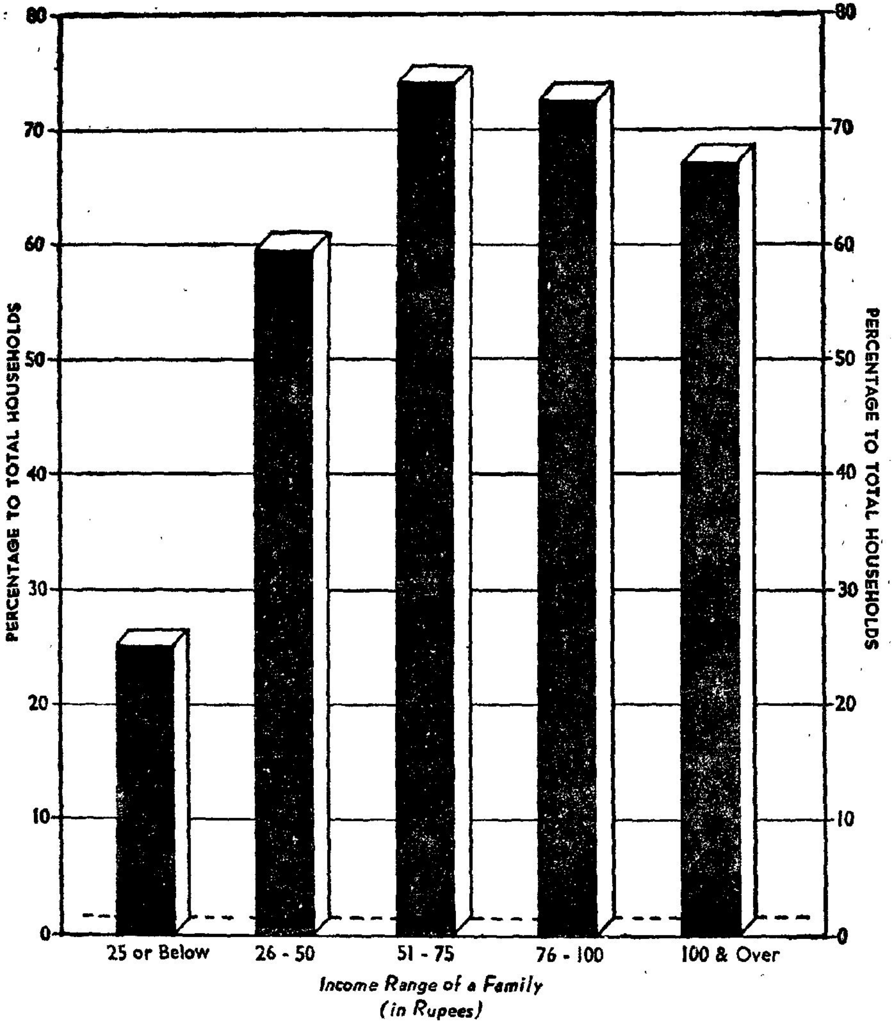
**Indebtedness**

136. Low levels of income and the inevitable high family expenditure have led most of the families to borrow money from money lenders and as a rule, the villagers are always in debt. Out of 649 households, as many as 429 households are indebted. The villager has to incur a variety of expenditure with his meagre income; festivals, marriage ceremony, the death ceremony etc., are the inevitable items of expenditure a man cannot avoid. Table No. XXXI indicates the extent of indebtedness among the people of varying income levels.

It clearly shows that the extent of indebtedness is high in middle income groups ; while 73.9 per cent of households of income range Rs. 51-75 are in debt, the incidence of debt in the lower income group of Rs. 25 or below, is only 25 per cent.

137. The proportion of indebtedness steadily increases from the initial income ranges upto the income group Rs. 51-75 from where it slowly declines. 67.1 per cent of wealthy households of income range more than Rs. 100 are in debt. Landless labourers very often borrow money or grain from their landlords

## INDEBTEDNESS BY INCOME GROUPS



## TABLE No. XXXI

### Indebtedness by income groups

| Income group (Rupees per month) | Number of households | Number of households in debt | Percentage of indebted households | Total debt (Rupees) | Average debt per indebted household Rs.nP. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| 25 or below | 28 | 7 | 25.00 | 1,700 | 242.85 |
| 26—50 | 207 | 123 | 59.43 | 49,375 | 401.42 |
| 51—75 | 226 | 167 | 73.89 | 87,300 | 522.75 |
| 76—100 | 112 | 81 | 72.32 | 61,850 | 763.58 |
| 101 and over | 76 | 51 | 67.11 | 61,390 | 1,203.72 |
| Total | 649 | 429 | 66.10 | 2,61,615 | 609.82 |

free of interest; but sometimes if the amount is big enough, some valuables are mortgaged to the landholder. Disabled by debt, most of them work year after year for one landlord who dictates terms and conditions. Heavy debtors could never repay fully, nor could they readily shift their debts from one creditor to another. Most of the lands of small cultivators are found to be mortgaged and the peasants more often not able to retain mortgaged lands sell away some portion. It is said that a large number of lands are passing from Hindu cultivators to Muslims who acquired cash by way of trade in far-eastern countries.

#### Causes of debt

138. The villagers are born in debt, live in debt and die in debt; in fact they feel at no point of time that they are free from the shackles of debt. Cultivation is becoming a non-profitable occupation, due to poor yield, growing expenditure and the mounting cost of living; generally most of the households are in debt due to borrowing for household cultivation or family maintenance. As many as 217 borrowings are made to meet cultivation expenses, out of a total number of 465 households. There are 204 borrowings for meeting day to day expenses or the family needs, house construction or repairs was the purpose of debt in respect of 14 families and 6 families are in debt due to marriage expenses, while purchase of cattle happened to be the cause among 5 households. There are 8 families who incurred debt for the cause of educating their children. The percentage of debt due to different causes will be seen from Table No. XXXII.

#### Source of credit

139. As in many other villages, the private money-lender is the chief source of credit and the institutional credit has not gained ground in Visavanoor. The traders, and the big landholders besides their profession do money-lending business and very often the rates of interests are high. It is common that these private money-lenders lend money to the poor folk

# CAUSES OF DEBT

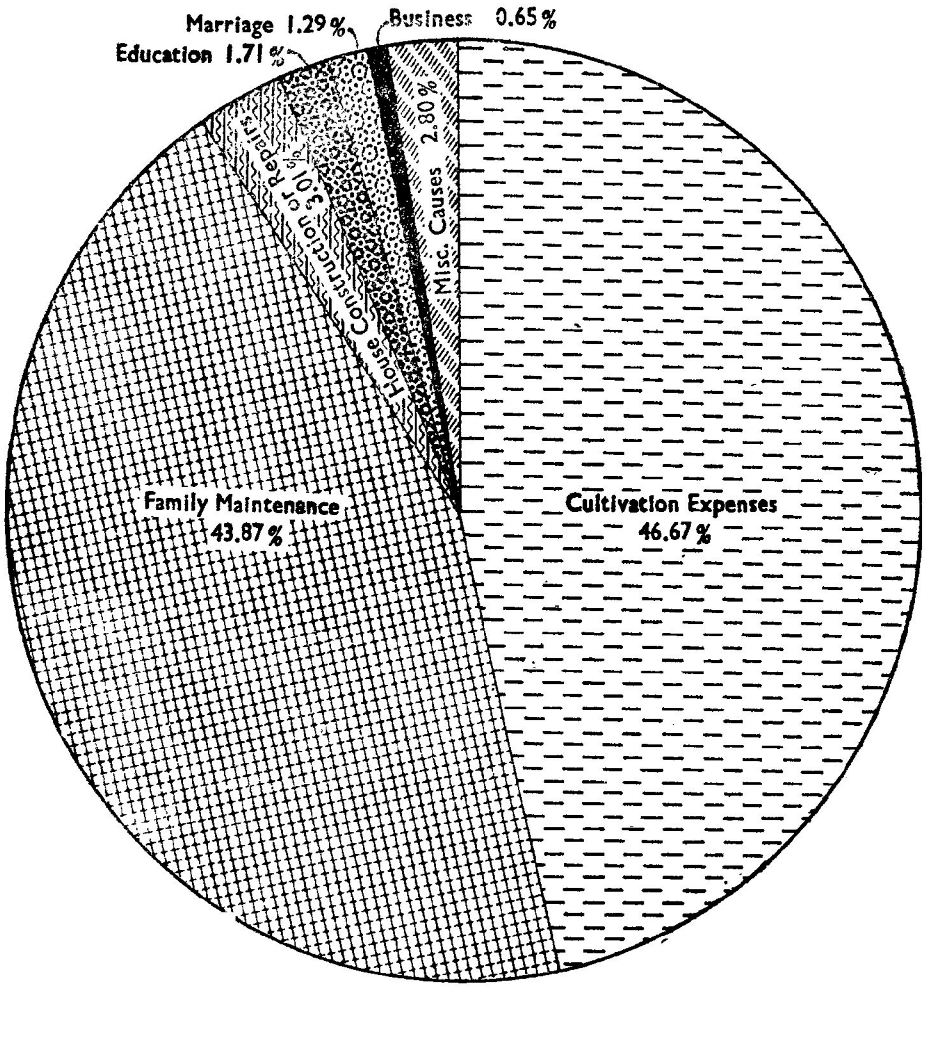


TABLE No. XXXII

**Causes of indebtedness**

| Cause of debt | Amount of debt (Rs) | Number of families in debt | Percentage of debt due to the total amount of debt |
|---|---|---|---|
| Purchase of land | 3,100 | 3 | 0.65 |
| House construction or repairs | 11,550 | 14 | 3.01 |
| Marriages | 4,750 | 6 | 1.29 |
| To give dowry | 1,000 | 1 | 0.22 |
| Sickness | 800 | 2 | 0.43 |
| Family expenses | 1,00,795 | 204 | 43.87 |
| Household cultivation | 1,32,795 | 217 | 46.67 |
| Business | 1,550 | 3 | 0.65 |
| Court expenses | 900 | 2 | 0.43 |
| Purchase of cattle | 2,150 | 5 | 1.07 |
| Education | 2,225 | 8 | 1.71 |
| Total | 2,61,615 | 465 | 100.00 |

on heavy rates of interest or the land or house of the poor is mortgaged; some lend money on what is called 'தானிய வட்டி' (interest by grain) that is to say, the farmer has to repay the money in terms of grain, of course on the price dictated by the money lender, which would be far below the market rates. Co-operative credit is yet to gain ground among the people. Only in 1961, a multi-purpose co-operative society has been started in the main village and it has been registered under the Act, credit operations have not been started yet. Some of the people in the northern most hamlet of Pukkulam, are members of a co-operative society in Anandur, a border village of Tiruvadanai taluk, due to close proximity and they get agricultural credit at cheap rates but not all the peasants have come forward to utilise these facilities. The Table No. XXXIII indicates the different sources of credit and the extent of use by the villagers.

**Land reforms**

140. The land reform measures taken by the democratic government after Independence have had the far-reaching effects on the life and economy of the people. Before Independence, Visavanoor was under the Ramnad Zamindari rule; only on September 7, 1949, the ryotwari land settlement was introduced with effect from the Fasli year 1368 (1958-59) after the abolition of the Zamindari system under the Madras (Estates Abolition and conversion into Ryotwari) Act XVI of 1948. According to this Act, the entire estate was taken over by Government and the lands were surveyed and settled on ryotwari principles under the directions of a Settlement Officer. The entire lands of the village including all communal lands, forests, rivers, streams, tanks, irrigation works, fisheries ferries, etc., were transferred to the Government and

**TABLE No. XXXIII**

**Source of credit and rates of interest**

| Source of credit | Number of borrowings with the rates of interest (per cent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1½ | 4½ | 5&5½ | 6&6½ | 8 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 24 | 25 | Above 25 |
| Cooperative Society | ... | ... | 1 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Private money-lenders | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | 1 | 4 | 173 | 6 | 2 | 58 | 29 | 23 | 25 | 56 |
| Government agencies | ... | 26 | 168 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

vest in them free of all encumbrances. After close examination of records and other evidences, ryotwari pattas were given to the peasants. One of the major changes due to the abolition of Zamindari is that the cultivator need not pay half share of the harvested grain and he has to pay land tax in terms of money. The main features of the land settlement is to establish a tax system based upon the acreage of land owned, and not upon the grain harvested by the peasant. The peasant is required to pay a fixed annual cash tax, instead of a fixed proportion of the harvested produce. Under the old system of land revenue in the Zamindar's regime, the ryots of Visavanoor paid one half of the total produce harvested as the tax, to the Zamindar, and of course, the intermediaries like the Village Headman, Karnam, Revenue Inspector etc., snatched away a considerable amount of crop, which means a sizeable proportion of the harvested grain due to the Zamindari and a part of the farmer's share. Now, after the village was taken over by the Government, all types of middlemen were eliminated and the peasant is free from their harassment; under the new regulation of land settlement all the lands were measured and surveyed once again by the Government Survey Department, the accounts were settled in 1959 and pattas were issued to each ryot, confirming the rights of the peasant on the land. The peasant now pays *Kisthi* or land tax direct to Government in terms of cash. The Village Headman and Karnam remain now as mere officials of the Government getting a small salary and they suffered the terrible loss of prestige and power they were enjoying in the olden days; also they incurred a heavy loss in their income.

141. But it must be noted, that the farmer finds it somewhat difficult to pay the tax in cash and he feels that it would be easy at the time of harvest to remit the tax by way of produce. But on the other hand, people derive satisfaction in the sense that they are now paying only a smaller amount of money than what would have been paid in terms of grain, and they need not lose anything towards the payment to intermediaries. The ryotwari system of land tenure was, of course, " based upon the typically European assumption that the land possessed a high cast value" and soon after the introduction of the ryotwari settlement, the villagers first felt the difficulty in paying cash taxes, as they used to remit the half portion of the harvested grain as land tax, for generations together. It might have been expected that the villagers would be caught by the need for cash money and this would make the peasants to participate increasingly in the urban markets or some outside agency. This was true in one sense. The cultivators have to sell more and more products for cash; but, as a rule, they do not actually go to the big paddy markets or the nearby towns for this purpose. Paddy merchants or some commission agents usually come to the village, purchase grains and carry them to the urban markets.

# CHAPTER V

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

### Temples

142. As mentioned earlier, Visavanoor is a village of multi-religions; though Muslims and Catholics form a considerable proportion of the village society, the atmosphere is essentially of a Hindu village. There are a number of temples, the chief among them are Ayyanar koil and Vijayamakaliamman koil, near the the hamlet of Vadakku Visavanoor; the shrines of Pillayar or Ganesha, Mariamman, Kaliamman etc., are found not only in the street corners but also under Margosa and Peepal trees, by the roadside, by tanks and in deserted places too. In fact, it is a rare phenomenon to find a village without a temple in South India; it is a common saying that one ought not live in a village without a temple. In Visavanoor, there are atleast one or two Hindu shrines in each hamlet; a mosque is there in the main village; there are three Catholic churches; one big church with the tall massive towers in Kalladithidal, and others are smaller ones in the hamlets of Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli. The church in Kannappan Kudiyiruppu belongs to Protestant Mission of Church of South India.

### Mode of worship

143. Hindus have no fixed hours for worship, nor have they any common worship like Muslims and Christians. Collective participation can be found only on the festival days. But each one worships by himself and for himself and makes his way to temple on important festivals and on new moon days with his offerings of coconut, flowers, saffron etc., and oil for the lamp burning close to the shrine. It is quite common that Hindu devotees take vows to get relief from sickness or any distress; sometimes women who are anxious for offspring, vow that if they attain their wish, they will offer coconuts to the deity. The notable feature that strikes to mind is the extreme importance attached to religion. In religion, the Hindu lives, moves and has his being. His whole action, his thoughts, all that he does day by day and on occasions of marriages and funeral ceremonies, are tinged with religion. Almost in every hamlet, except perhaps Kalladithidal, Suriyankottai and Thirugukalli where Catholics are predominant, we see a small temple or *Beedam* (altar) is built in the heart of the hamlet, dedicated to the deity of Mariamman; Mariamman and Kaliamman and such *gramadevatas* or village deities are supposed to preside over pestilential diseases and evil spirits. The custom among caste Hindus and Adi-dravidas of worshipping such grama devatas seems to be a remnant of pre-Aryan times. People of Visavanoor, especially the Pallans and Parayans have still firm faith in the existence of demonical hierarchy. Chonian, Karuppasamy, Changili Karuppan, Pechiamman, Kali, Badhra Kali, Vijayamakali are the chief demons whom the *Pusari* or the priest professes to control with the aid of *mantrams* and offerings of fowls and goats. They believe that all kinds of diseases in children are cured by the *Viboothi* or sacred ash, chanted by mantrams by the priest.

### Ayyanar

144. Ayyanar or Shasta ranks first among the village deities. The temple dedicated to this God stands on the outskirts of the main village and a large curious collection of horses, elephants, and some such animals and shrines are found in front of the temple. Till recently, people of all castes in all the hamlets join together to celebrate this festival in every summer; the Ayyanar festival was conducted last, before five years and due to some factions inside the village, this was abandoned. In olden days, Ayyanar festival was celebrated annually and all castes participated in rituals without any bar on caste or creed. It is said that all the people, young and old, men and women thronged to the Ayyanar Temple, during the festival days; youngsters found delight in what is called 'Erudu Kattu' or chasing the bulls which was conducted

as part of the festivities. The bulls were brought from places far and near and men who managed to control bulls were rewarded. The factions inside the village have subsided now and the villagers hopefully look forward the day when Ayyanar festival is revived.

**Festivals**

145. Deepavali is one of the important Hindu festivals celebrated by all castes; but festivals which are particular features of the village communities are those of *Pongal* or harvest festival and Ayyanar festival. Festivals are the occasions of joy and happiness, especially for the children and housewives. People buy new clothes to the members of family, the sweetmeats are prepared or some fowls are offered to the deity and so many items of expenditure are incurred during a festival; and it is a 'must', especially in a rural household. The pattern of expenditure on religious festivals, for the people of different religions are shown in Table No. XXXIV.

**Manners and Customs**

146. No doubt, religious and social customs and manners vary from caste to caste and religion to religion. In the cut and colour of the clothes and the style of wearing them, in the peculiar shape and designs of the jewellery and the manner in which they are displayed, different castes have many rules, each possessing its own significance. Birth customs and funeral ceremonies sometimes differ widely; some observe special rites in their weddings; puberty rites are varied in nature and period of pollution etc. Yet each caste has its own way; absurd as some practices may appear, but they arouse neither contempt nor dislike in members of other castes which do not admit them.

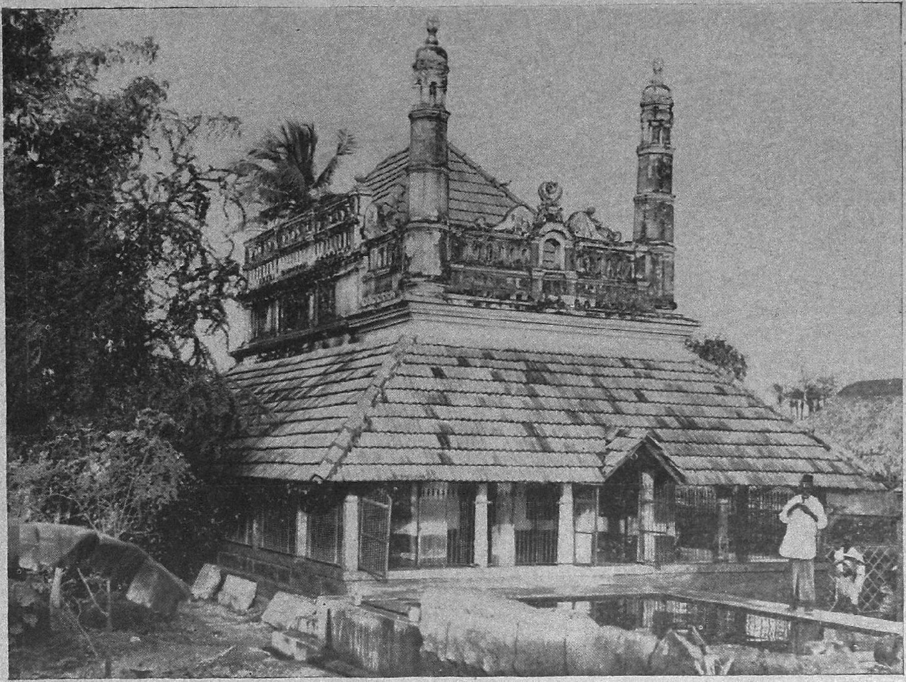
147. There are, however, no voluntary organizations or clubs or associations of any kind among the different communities in Visavanoor. Informal groupings in the pials of the important persons' houses and gossips and discussions of the traditionally well-to-do persons and caste leaders have an importance, where day-to-day developments in the village or its surroundings are reviewed, news exchanged and disseminated, ideas are mooted and outlines for plans of action are formulated. Especially when the festivals like Mariamman Pongal approach, people gather in the dwellings of the influential persons and discuss the proposal of celebrating the Pongal and the 'big person' or 'Periyathanakkarar' takes the lead in collecting the the money from each household. He has always a fixed core of permanent and loyal members and they look after the decoration of the temple and details of festivities. There is, of course, collective participation on such festivals, irrespective of the ritual precedence of various castes.

**Inter-caste relationship**

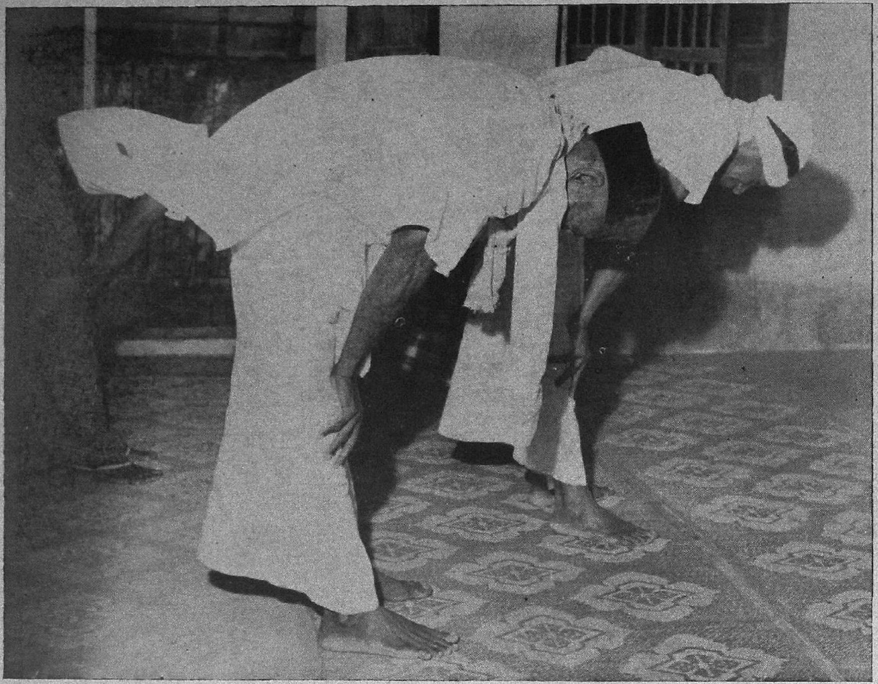
148. As stated earlier, the relationships among the people of different religions and the various castes are cordial; there are no factions or quarrels between one caste and another. The general view that the solidarity of caste is great and it will nullify the village unity in the villages where several castes live, may be somewhat plausible, but in the case of Visavanoor, a purview of happenings within the village will expose its falsity. The people of one caste are dependent on other castes and no separateness or seclusion is found. It may be true that caste is an institution of strength and also it is pervasive; anyhow, the castes living in this village are quite inter-dependent economically and otherwise. Economic inter-dependency of the different communities is also connected with the differentiation of their occupations inherent in caste system.

**Inter-dependence**

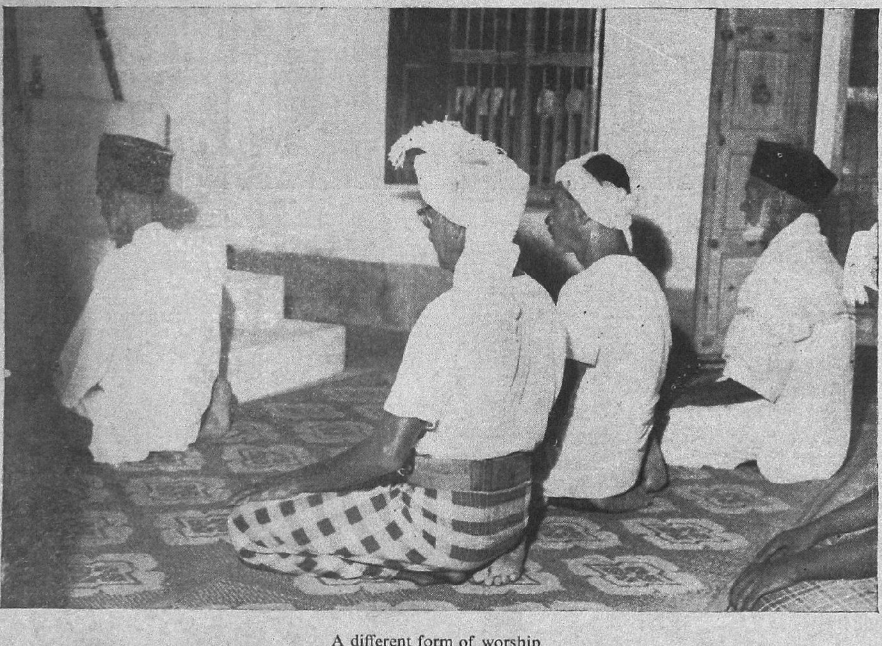
149. Of course, many of the castes follow pastoral or agricultural pursuits and there are some castes having particular occupations handed down from generations. The carpenter does the traditional occupation of his forefathers and he makes plough, Manvetti or spade, Kalaikottu etc., for the agricultural castes and it is also his duty to see that the peasant's agricultural implements are all in good repair. The goldsmith makes the jewellery for weddings and other social ceremonies and his job is indispensable; quite the same case with blacksmith who makes agricultural implements for all the castes following cultivation of soil. The Ambattan or the barber attends to hair-cutting and shaving for menfolk and youngsters; the barber is commonly known as *Kudimakan* or 'son of the village'. The Ambattan is also the village surgeon, besides his profession and the wife of the barber is the nurse as well as midwife of the village.



The Mosque



A form of worship by Muslims



A different form of worship

TABLE No. XXXIV

## Expenditure on festivals

| Community | No. of households | No. of households with expenditure on festivals | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nil | Below Rs. 5 | Rs. 6–10 | Rs. 11–20 | Rs. 21–30 | Rs. 31–40 | Rs. 41–50 | Rs. 51–100 | Rs.101 & above |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| Idayar | 151 | ... | 15 | 28 | 41 | 35 | 3 | 24 | 4 | 1 |
| Maravar | 44 | ... | 3 | 7 | 16 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 1 | ... |
| Parayan | 32 | ... | 5 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 7 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallar | 12 | ... | 1 | 2 | 7 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | ... | 2 | ... | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | ... | 2 | 4 | 5 | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | ... | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Asari | 10 | ... | ... | 6 | 1 | 2 | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyan | 10 | ... | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | ... | 4 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslims | 55 | ... | 3 | 1 | 7 | 25 | 8 | 10 | 1 | ... |
| Catholics | 226 | ... | 17 | 21 | 66 | 64 | 12 | 27 | 18 | 1 |
| Protestants | 37 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 2 | ... |
| Total | 649 | 2 | 58 | 95 | 196 | 163 | 31 | 73 | 29 | 2 |

Vannan or the washerman washes the clothes of the every family except perhaps the families belonging to the low castes. There is no laundry or shaving-saloon in Visavanoor. In fact, each community employs its own washerman and barber and a man does not change his barber or washerman, as payment is made annually in terms of grain and old relationships are always respected. The dhoby has got special duties and privileges on any ritual occasions and festivals. Members of Pandaram caste perform important priestly functions for caste Hindus. Equally, Parayars, Pallars and Chakkiliyars, besides tied workers in the fields of caste Hindus are the traditional men to attend to manual duties in funerals; Parayars who play drums for religious ceremonies and funeral processions are quite indispensable. People very often mix together in the streets, in trade and in agricultural operations; mutual assistance is always found among the peasants which exists beyond the caste barriers.

**Caste panchayats**

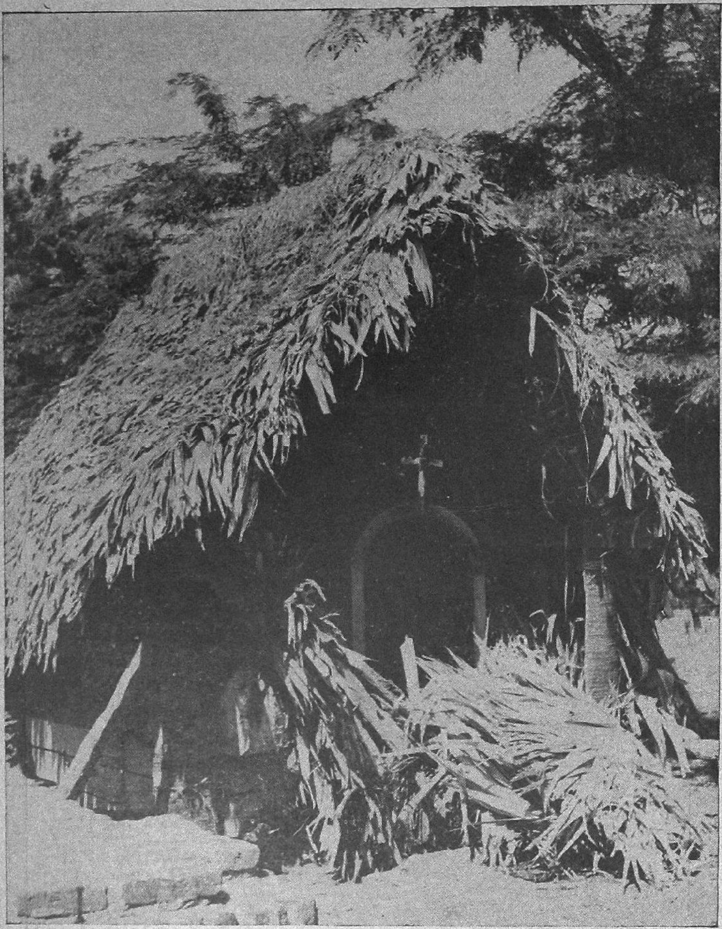
150. Each of the major castes has got some sort of Caste Panchayat or internal organisation through which disputes and quarrels are settled and unity is maintained. Some elderly members, usually married men of above-average intelligence and somewhat wealthier persons are elected from their own caste as panchayatadars and these leaders of the community, in the company of all married men or heads of families of the caste, are hearing and adjudicating between private disputants, concerning debts, petty quarrels, small thefts, assault, adultery etc. Fines are sometimes imposed after settlement and these fines are paid to the caste fund or temple fund, as the case may be. Among Muslims, the manager or chief man of the mosque, and some other elders of the community usually assemble in front of the mosque and settle the disputes arising within the Muslim community. They also impose fines to the affender and it is added to the Mosque fund. It is said, that among Catholics, very often the Parish Priest with some leading Udayar men enquires the complaints arising among themselves and settle the disputes and quarrels amicably. Among the Adi-dravida castes, this was often inadequate because there is no unity among them and there remain some cleavages between local factions owing allegiance to different landlords. But there is a tendency for disputes unsettled among themselves to be referred to higher castes such as Maravars in some hamlets, and Udayars, in some other hamlets, as the case may be. The existence of caste court has been interpreted as a proof of the strength, if not of the autonomy of a caste. The settlement of quarrels occasionally brings out the importance of the dominant caste. The chiefmen of Marava caste now-a-days settle quarrels among Adi-dravidas and Shanars; the sentiment that any dispute or quarrel within the caste should be settled among the fellow caste men themselves, does not seem to be very strong, among the Harijans. On the other hand, there is a tendency among them to take their cases to the elders of Marava community or some influential caste Hindus in the hamlet, who by virtue of their status and influence, standing in an intermediate caste position wield economic and political power over all inferior castes. They very often administer justice among the members of their own caste and as well as to all persons of low castes, who seek their intervention. Some take the disputes to the caste Hindu landlords under whom they are employed.

151. It is but clearly visible that the economic power and social status of an individual count much in such matters. If a man commits adultery with a girl of higher caste, for example, it is considered as a threat to the 'status quo' of the whole village society. His own caste men will disapprove of his criminal action, as strongly as the caste of the degraded woman. Ex-communication is the automatic punishment in almost all such cases. But if a higher caste man has any illicit relationship with a girl of Adi-dravidas, the sentiments will not be so strong and mild punishments will be given.

**Village panchayat**

152. The village forms a Panchayat under an elected Panchayat Board with a President, Vice-President and 11 other members. This Panchayat is a nascent one, formed on 18-10-1960. The elections were unanimous and the composition of the Panchayat Board more or less represents the major castes in the village and the panchayat now becomes the principal administrative and executive institution here. There are two Harijan members in the Panchayat and no woman is found in the Board. However, under the new system of Panchayat Raj or democratic decentralisation, a lady member has to be nominated and soon a woman is expected to be nominated by the present Panchayat Board. The Board controls a fund derived from a small portion of the

The Catholic church at Kalladithidal



An impoverished church of Harijan converts at Kalladithidal

village revenue, besides the collection of house tax and vehicles tax; a paid clerk is in charge of collection of taxes. The Panchayat Board is composed of elderly married persons; the members were unanimously elected by the respective major communities in the different hamlets. The incumbents of both the President and Vice-President are people of Maravar caste, as Maravars are the more influential people, though numerically not strong enough. Nearly all the organised activities of the village are based upon the unanimous agreement of the panchayat members, which again shows the importance of the village unity and mutual indispensability of various castes among one another. The panchayat now maintains smooth relationship among the different sections of the village community; it is concerned, not with the law as written, but with the law as it suits the local conditions of the village and the sentiments of the people on the various issues. The panchayat has got no building of its own; the house of the President is used for all practical purposes. Meetings of the Panchayat Board are held in the Panchayat Union School in the main village and the meetings are regularly attended by the members. The panchayat has yet to carry out its functions in regard to village sanitation, water-supply, link roads etc. "Thotti" or street cleaner is not employed and arrangements for cleaning the streets and removing human waste are much essential for such a large village.

### Village officials

153. Before the the advent of Village Panchayat, all the functions relating to village administration were vested with the village officials who are hereditary and honorary workers. Their role in the village is even now an important and influential one; the Village Headman and the Village Karnam are the key officials, commanding much respect and influence among the people. The headman of the village or village *munsiff*, as he is commonly called, is a Marava youth, hailing from an influential and rich family; as village headman, the whole management of the village affairs is vested in him. His prime duty is to collect *Kist* or land tax from the ryots and to remit the money to the taluk treasury once a month. He has the power of deciding petty civil cases and administering justice inside the village, but rarely he exercises this power. He reports to the higher authorities serious cases of theft, accidental deaths, suicides etc., and he maintains particulars of births and deaths occurring in the village, rainfall etc. He assists the Government officials, revenue or other departmental officials, in their official duties and even supply those authorities with necessary provisions, when they come to the village in the official capacity or for the sake of private work. He is the person who represents the village to the Government and vice versa. He does his multifarious duties besides looking after cultivation of his lands.

### Karnam

154. Next in importance to Village Munsiff, is the Karnam or the accountant of the village, who is an elderly man of Pillai caste. He keeps all sorts of village accounts pertaining to land, crops in the field, growth or failure of crops in the fields of different pattadars. He is expected to know the extent, rent, name of ryot etc., of each and every field in all the hamlets of the village and he has to assist the headman in preparing accounts, when money is remitted. He inspects the fields frequently and sends reports periodically about the condition of crops for the assessment of land revenue. During the days of zamindari regime, Karnam's position was at its zenith and he commanded extreme influence among the ryots and after the introduction of ryotwari settlement, he suffers a loss of prestige and influence, besides loss in monetary income receiving as gifts from the landholders.

155. Next come the Talayaris, two Konar youths who do the duties of the police in the village. A Talayari has to assist the Village Headman in cases civil and criminal; he has to watch the village at nights, patrol the fields when the crops are ripe and to see that no thefts occur. He assists the headman to collect land revenue from ryots; very often the Talayari is the 'messenger man' of the village headman. The Talayari goes to the treasury in charge of money, when remittances are sent from the village. Vettiyans are the menial servants of the village, and they are generally drawn from Adi-dravida caste. It is customary that these village officials and servants who render service for the upkeep of the village constitution, are paid by all ryots in terms of grains. The ryot, when he gathers his harvested produce in the threshing floor and before removing it to his house, he distributes a portion to each of the village officials and servants according to the nature and importance of the person. Even now the headman receives one or more bundles of paddy straw from each of the ryots, apart from the payment of grain.

**Superstitions**

156. The Hindus are extremely superstitious and they always believe in omens, both good and bad. For example, it is a good omen, if on setting out on any business, a man sees a crow flying from left to right. If the crow flies from right side to left, it is regarded as a bad omen. In the same way, if one meets a widow while stepping out of his house, it is a bad sign, while it is otherwise and good, if a married woman happens to cross him. The movements of animals are also watched by several Hindus, which are some sort of indications of good or bad times. The crossing of a cat on the footpath is considered bad, whereas if a jackal is met with, it will bring all luck and fortune, in regard to the work or business in hand. The notes of lizard have also varying meanings of fortune or ill-luck. Sneezing of a person or the sudden extinguishing of a lamp amidst any function are considered bad omens. People are much conservative, besides fatalists; no people anywhere else will stick with such wonderful tenacity to the beliefs and customs instituted by their forefathers. Ask a Hindu, why he follows this or that practice, he will at once say that his father or mother taught him to do so and never he knows the purpose or reason for that religious belief or superstitions; they were passed on to them by their forefathers.

**Astrology**

157. The villagers frequently go to the astrologer to fix an auspicious day to plough, or to sow or to name a propitious hour for commencing the construction of a house; some consult the astrologer to select a day for the marriage of his son or daughter or to go to the neighbouring village to bring his daughter-in-law home. The visiting 'Kurikarans' usually Kuravas, have ample business among these people. The peasant scarcely begins to plough or to sow his land or to reap his harvest without first consulting the astrologer or any local elderly man as to the auspicious day and the proper time. Some persons who are more orthodox furnish the astrologer with the exact time of the birth of child and have the *Jathagam* or horoscope prepared for the newly-born baby. This jathagam is expected to foretell all the fortunes and ill-lucks in the course of the life of the infant.

158. Whenever any work or business, or agricultural operation is to be started, Hindus avoid certain timings known as *Ragukalam* supposed to be a 'bad time', which varies for the different days in a week. On no account, new assignment of work is taken up in this period. 'Ragukalam' is said to last for 3¾ *Naligais* equal to an hour and half and the different Ragu periods for each day are as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | 7-30 a.m. | to | 9-00 a.m. |
| Tuesday | 3-00 p.m. | to | 4-30 p.m. |
| Wednesday | 12-00 Noon | to | 1-30 p.m. |
| Thursday | 1-30 p.m. | to | 3-00 p.m. |
| Friday | 10-30 a.m. | to | 12-00 Noon |
| Saturday | 9-00 a.m. | to | 10-30 a.m. |
| Sunday | 4-30 p.m. | to | 6-00 p.m. |

In more or less similar way, people avoid certain days known as 'Soolam' while undertaking journeys outside the village, especially long travel. If one undertakes a travel to any town or place outside, he avoids these Soolam days or in auspicious days according to the direction in which the destination lies. Sundays and Fridays are considered inauspicious, if he has to travel to any place on the West, while Mondays and Saturdays are avoided for travelling towards East. If the journey is to be performed towards North, the inauspicious days are Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Thursday is considered not auspicious if one travels towards South.

**Joint family**

159. In some rural parts, joint families were more common once, but now a days, simple families are more in number while the joint family system is slowly losing ground, and Visavanoor is one such village where we see that there are 115 joint families out of 649 households i.e., 17.7%. Under joint family system generally the father, mother and the married brothers with their wives and children, unmarried brothers and sisters all live under one roof with a common kitchen. In some cases, as many as five or six families live together; the landed property, house etc., are held under common ownership and each member works for the family's crop. It is, in short, a group of simple families. In popular opinion, of course, joint family is regarded as the ideal, but in actual practice large joint families of more than two generations are not commonly met with. In the hamlet of Kalladithidal, for example, the largest joint family is having 26 members comprising members of two generations. Other joint families found here are small; very often the joint family comprises the eldest son, his

wife and children together with either one or both aged parents ; the other brothers, after getting married live separately, in adjoining houses.

160. Elementary families grow into joint families and in course of time they break up again into several elementary families and the process is going on. The trend which is commonly found now a days is the preference towards elementary or nucleated families. Simple families are 273 in number. Table No. XXXV classifies the households of different communities into simple, intermediate and joint families, which is self-explanatory. Those families comprising the married couple and their unmarrird children are taken as simple families while intermediate families, consist of a married couple and unmarried brother, sister and one of the parents.

**Womenfolk**

161. The chief occupation of women among the cultivating households is domestic. Barring the agricultural labourers' families, women in other families look after the household duties, besides nursing their children; but most of the time of cooly woman is taken away for field labour. A woman's day begins with cleaning and sweeping the house, smearing the floor with cowdung and bringing water from the nearby pond—these she does quite early in the morning. Most of her time is devoted to look after the house; cooking takes up a greater part of her time and even if the household is somewhat rich, the wife usually takes it upon herself to cook her husband's meals. Drawing water from the pond, churning, husking, winnowing and other such homely tasks are all attended by her, of course with assistance of grown-up daughters, if any. The housewife welcomes her weary husband with gruel or buttermilk as he steps in; she feeds the young boys and girls and then she entertains her husband and other elderly persons with food. Then only she takes her meal, whatever is left behind.

162. Out-door work is by no means prohibited and mostly women in the households of small cultivators and landless coolies take part in field work and farming, in addition to cooking and other household duties. While men usually plough the land, prepare seed beds and sow seed, womenfolk generally attend transplating and weeding. Maravar and Konar women generally attend to farmwork on their own fields and it is womenfolk of Adi-dravida castes and less prosperous caste Hindus who seek work anywhere. Women among Vellalas, Asaris etc., do not go outside their homes except to attend some Pongal or some functions or ceremonies in the houses of their friends and relatives. Muslim women, are mostly confined to their homes and participate little in the social life of the village. Muslim girls never come out in the presence of strangers. The confinement of women to household life and work in almost all the cross-sections of the village community, and the complete absence of opportunities for expansion of their mental horizon and widening of cultural outlook deprive the village of the social, cultural and economic contribution, which womenfolk can make to the life of the village.

**Co-operative Society**

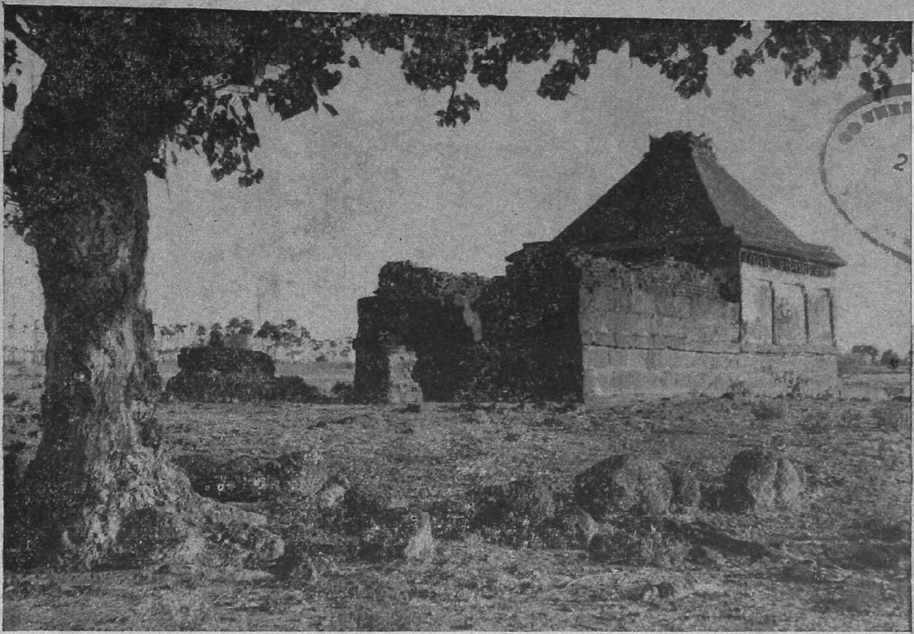
163. Till recently the villagers have no co-operative society in Visavanoor. A co-operative society, styled as "Visavanoor Multi-purpose Co-operative Society" has sprung up on 27th September 1961 in the main hamlet due to the efforts of a few leading land holders of Muslims and Thevar. It is, at present manned by a Muslim merchant and the society has no building of its own. It has a strength of fifty four members only and the share capital raised was only Rs. 800. An executive body of five Panchayattadars has been elected to look after the activities. Though the society is open to all communities in all hamlets, the Scheduled Castes and other less-prosperous caste Hindus like Pandaram, Konar etc., do not come forward to this joint endeavour. The number of households of different communities who have joined the co-operative society will be seen from Table No. XXXVI. No credit facilities have so far been provided yet and the co-operative departmental authorities are also in touch with this organisation. Scope for the expansion of co-operative credits is very large, considering the large population and vast area under plough in Visavanoor.

164. Prior to starting of this co-operative organisation within the village, a few leading ryots in the hamlet of Pukkulam, joined a co-operative society in Anandur, a closeby village in the neighbouring taluk of Tiruvadanai and they prefer to remain in the society at Anandur, rather to join hands with the main village, mainly due to the proximity of Anandur.

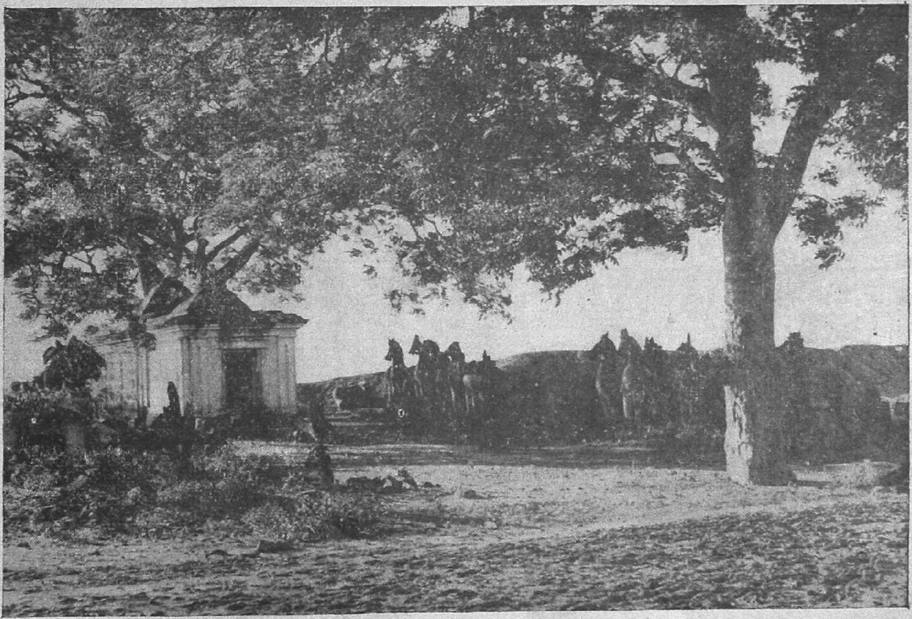
## TABLE No. XXXV

### Types of families

| Community | No. of house-holds | No. of households according to types of families | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Simple | Intermediate | Joint | Others |
| Idayar | 151 | 62 | 42 | 17 | 30 |
| Maravar | 44 | 19 | 11 | 6 | 8 |
| Parayar | 32 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| Vellala | 15 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Pallar | 12 | 7 | ... | 3 | 2 |
| Chettiyar | 12 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Ambattan | 12 | 5 | 4 | 3 | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Asari | 10 | 6 | 2 | 2 | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | 1 | 3 | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | 1 | 2 | ... | 1 |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Valluvar | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Muslims | 55 | 22 | 10 | 16 | 7 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | 104 | 46 | 47 | 29 |
| Protestants | 37 | 14 | 8 | 3 | 12 |
| Total | 649 | 273 | 151 | 115 | 110 |

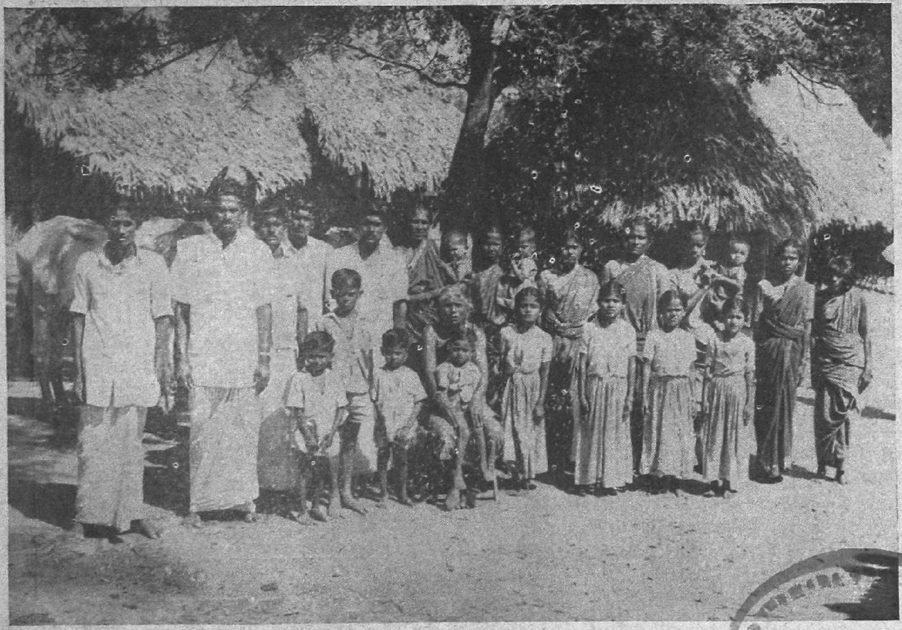


Vijayamakaliamman Temple



The Ayyanar Temple

A woman patient is getting treatment from a native witch doctor.



A Catholic Udayar joint family

22 JUN 1965

TABLE No. XXXVI

Co-operative Society

| Community | Number of households | No. of households which have joined the co-operative society |
|---|---|---|
| Idayar | 151 | 9 |
| Maravar | 44 | 19 |
| Parayar | 32 | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | 2 |
| Pallar | 12 | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | ... |
| Asari | 10 | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | 1 |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... |
| Muslims | 55 | 15 |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | ... |
| Protestants | 37 | ... |
| Total | 649 | 46 |

## Community Development

165. The effects of Community Development Programme on the people of Visavanoor are little; the villagers mostly are not aware of the very existence of such a development scheme for their welfare. The village came under the Ilayangudi Development Block only on 2nd October 1961 and prior to introduction of the scheme, some preliminary work was done by the Block Planning Officer. The formation of Panchayat in Visavanoor was, of course, realised only by the efforts of the Block Planning Officer and as such a beginning was made for joint effort of villagers for self-help towards the welfare of rural folk. The work of the Block Development Organisation is only at its initial stage and due to extreme poverty and lack of transport and communications, the development plans take a long time to reach Visavanoor. It was a curious fact, that none of the development officials has ever visited this village and occasionally some villagers themselves go to the Block Development Office to obtain some of their needs. Absence of transport, is definitely a bottleneck in development, despite the drawing up of multifarious improvement schemes. The details of development activities such as supply of better seeds, better manures etc., to the farmers and the participation by the villagers are shown in Table No. XXXVII.

TABLE No. XXXVII

## Development activities

| Community | Total No. of households | Secured: Better irrigation | Secured: Better types of cattle | Secured: Better seeds | Secured: Better implements | Secured: Better manure | Secured: More land for cultivation | Secured: Use of pesticides | Derived benefit: Improved methods of cultivation | Derived benefit: Land improvement measures like reclamation, conservation & consolidation | Derived benefit: National Extension Service or community projects | Participated in: Demonstration in improved agricultural practices. | Participated in: Activities, works of community project |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) |
| Idayar | 151 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 10 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Maravar | 44 | .. | ... | ... | ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Parayan | 32 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vellala | 15 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pallar | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Chettiyar | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Ambattan | 12 | ... | 2 | ... | 6 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vannan | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Asari | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... | ... |
| Chakkiliyar | 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Agamudiyar | 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Pandaram | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Panicker | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Brahmin | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Nadar | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Valluvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Veduvar | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Muslims | 55 | ... | 1 | 4 | ... | 10 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Roman Catholics | 226 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 44 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Protestants | 37 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 24 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Total | 649 | ... | 3 | 5 | 7 | 103 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

No. of households which have during the last five years

# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

166. We have come to the end of the story of Visavanoor and its people. The analysis of socio-economic features leads to an unmistakable impression that this village is a most backward one and the villagers are poverty-stricken. The developmental plans of the democratic Government have not reached this remote village. It has been abandoned by nature as well as man.

167. The natural resources of the village are limited; it is not bestowed with either fertile soil or irrigation sources such as rivers, canals, tanks etc. Lack of fertile soil, absence of irrigation systems, scanty rainfall and frequent droughts are the depressing features of agriculture. The farmers have primitive ways of farming and usage of modern agricultural implements, chemical fertilizers, improved seeds etc., is not resorted to. The yield of crops is miserably low and the farmers toil for a subsistence farming. The uneconomic farming leads to low levels of agricultural wages and the plight of landless labourers is none the less miserable.

168. Household industry or craft is conspicuous by their absence; nor even there is any chance for new industries to spring up. The cultivators and coolies are seasonally employed and for most part of the year they remain without work, as they have no secondary means of livelihood. Besides palmyra tapping, there are some traditional crafts such as carpentry and blacksmithy practised by a handful of artisan families and the earnings of these artisans are also meagre. The whole economy of the village thus presents a gloomy picture.

169. Absence of proper means of communication is a serious handicap to the villagers. The village is neither connected by rail nor by road; not even a regular cart-track connects the village to the pucca road nearby. In the rainy seasons the existing cart tracks are completely flooded and the village becomes practically inaccessible by any mode of transport and it is shut off from the outside world. The backwardness of the people may be attributed, to a large extent, to the poor means of communications and lack of contact with outer world. The absence of transport and communications is a bottleneck to the material development of people such as improvement in sanitation, medical aid, agricultural improvements etc. The villagers hope for better communication facilities and feel that only if the village is connected to nearby towns such as Ilayangudi and Paramakudi by motorable roads, development will be feasible. That is, of course, the only way for salvation!

## APPENDIX I

## CENSUS 1961—SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

### Household Schedule

Name of :—

District :

Taluk :

Village :

1. Name of the head of the family :

2. (a) Religion

   (b) Community

   (c) Name of S.C. or S.T.

3. Did this family settle down in this village within the last 10 years? If so, state reasons for migration to this village.

4. (a) Total number of members in the family :

   (b) Total number of rooms occupied by the family :

5. Has any member of the family left the village during the last 10 years in search of employment? If more than one member has gone away, state the total number of members.

6. Is any industry or business conducted in the house?

   If so, state the particulars :

   (a) Nature of Industry/business

   (b) Number of persons working in each

   (c) Total monthly income from each

   (d) When was it started?

   (e) Is any financial assistance received from—

   Government

   Co-operative Society

   Others

   (f) State the quantity produced per year.

   Quantity consumed at home

   Quantity available for sale

7. Total family income from—
   (a) Land under cultivation
   (b) Rent from land
   (c) Industry or business
   (d) Occupation
   (e) Others

8. Has the family incurred any debt? State the amount outstanding— *Amount* *Rate of Interest*
   (a) From Co-operative Society
   (b) Money-lenders
   (c) Banks
   (d) Government

9. What is the average expenditure per month on
   (a) Food
   (b) Education
   (c) Clothing
   (d) Fuel
   (e) Luxuries

10. (a) State the total area of land owned classified by crops cultivated.
   (b) Are the lands owned or taken on lease?
   (c) Are the lands hereditary or acquired? Indicate area under each.
   (d) How is the surplus produce marketed? Is it sold in the neighbouring town or in shandies or through middlemen who visit the villages?

   If sold to middlemen, is it because of financial assistance received from the middlemen for agricultural operation?

11. Has the household invested anything during the last 10 years on
   (a) Better irrigation
   (b) Better type of cattle
   (c) Better seeds
   (d) Better implements
   (e) Better manure
   (f) More land for cultivation
   (g) Pesticides
   (h) Improved method of cultivation
   (i) Other improvements.

12. **Diet** :

(a) How many times do they take meals in a day?

(b) What are the main constituents of their food?

(c) How many times in a week do they take non-vegetarian food?

(d) How many times do they take milk, eggs, fish and meat?

(e) Is any article of food forbidden? If so, state which and why?

13. Medical care :—

Do women go to hospital for confinement?

Do doctors visit the house for confinement?

Is the assistance of qualified midwife sought?

What is the medical system followed :

Allopathic

Homeopathic

Others

14. Cattle owned :

No. of cows

Bulls

Buffaloes

Goats

Sheep

15. Does the household possess :

(a) Bench

(b) Chair

(c) Stools

(d) Cot

(e) Cycle

(f) Battery light

(g) Radio

(h) Gramaphone

(i) Table

(j) Almirah

(k) Lantern

(l) Petromax

(m) Electric light

(n) Kerosene stove

(o) Car

(p) Bullock cart

(q) Jutka

16. What is the dress worn by

| | *Ordinary* | *Special occasions* |
|---|---|---|
| Men | | |
| Women | | |

17. What are the ornaments worn? Give sketches wherever possible.

18. Utensils used :

    What types of utensils are used for cooking and household use?

    (a) Earthenware (c) Copper

    (b) Aluminium (d) Brass

19. Does the household purchase newspaper daily?

20. Has any member of the family taken active part in politics?

21. Has any member taken part in social uplift?

22. Is the household member of a Co-operative Society?

23. What are the principal deities worshipped?

24. What is the expenditure on marriage?

25. Is any dowry given?

26. Is the family in debt on account of this?

| NAME | Sex | Age | Marital Status | Age at marriage | Literacy | Primary occupation | Monthly income | Secondary occupation | Monthly income | Activity, if not working | Is the occupation traditional or not? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total family income per month | | | | | | | | | | | |

## AREA UNDER

| | Crop I | Crop II | Crop III |
|---|---|---|---|
| Own lands | | | |
| Taken on lease | | | |
| Total... | | | |

## APPENDIX II

## CENSUS 1961—SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

### Village Schedule

1. Name of village :
2. District/Taluk :
3. Area :
4. No. of households :
5. Distance from nearest town :
6. Distance from nearest Railway Station :
7. Distance from main road :
8. Is it connected by bus ?
9. (a) Is there a Post Office/Telegraph Office in the village ?

   (b) If not, which is the nearest Post/Telegraph Office and distance at which situated ?
10. Is the village covered by the Community Development Programme ?
11. Is there a Panchayat in the village ?
12. Total population of the village—1951 & 1961 (& 1941 & 1931, if available)
13. Is the village electrified ?
14. Give the number of births and deaths during the past 10 years :

**I. Housing:**

(a) What are the common types of house ? (Give a brief description about type of roof, wall, flooring etc.)

(b) Are houses owned or rented ?

(c) Are the house-sites sufficient for the population ?

(d) Do members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes live separately from the others or is there any progress towards their living together ?

(e) What is the arrangement of houses in the village ?

**II. Literacy & Education :**

(a) Is there any school in the village ? (Specify whether it is Elementary, Higher Elementary, High School and also whether it is a night or day school.)

(b) What is the highest class upto which education is imparted ?

(c) Who runs the school ?

(d) Specify the number of students and teachers in each.

(e) Is there a reading room/library in the village ?

(f) Total number of schools :

**III. Health & Sanitation :**

(a) Common diseases of the village :

(b) Is native or indigenous medicine practised ? If so, by how many ?

(c) Give your impression of cleanliness (inside and outside the houses) :

(d) Are there any latrines in the village ?

(e) If there is no latrine, where do the villagers go to answer their calls of nature ?

(f) What is the source of drinking water ?

(g) What are the drainage facilities available in the village ? Is it adequate ?

(h) Do villagers send their clothes to the washerman for cleaning ?

(i) How often do they bathe and what do they use for body cleaning ?

(j) Was the village affected by epidemics recently like Cholera, Malaria, Small-pox etc.?

(k) What measures were taken to control their outbreak ?

(l) When did the last cases of epidemics occur ?

(m) What diseases are commonly prevalent in this village ?

(n) Which is the nearest hospital ?

(o) Is there a Primary Health Centre in the village ?

(p) Does it have a Maternity Ward ?

(q) Where does delivery take place ? At home or in the hospital ?

(r) Are there any midwives in the area ?

**IV. Social Life :**

(a) Do the villagers mix freely with each other on all occasions ?

(b) Is widow remarriage allowed ?

(c) What is the system of inheritance among the villagers ?

(d) What are the essential ceremonies that a man undergoes from birth to death ?

(e) What are the essential ceremonies that a woman undergoes from birth to death ?

(f) How is the body disposed off after death ?

(g) What is the expenditure incurred on these funeral rites ?

**V. Agriculture :**

(a) Total cultivable area :

(b) Principal crops grown with their area for 10 years :

(c) Have the villagers taken to improved methods of cultivation ?

(d) What are the sources of irrigation prevalent in the village ?

(e) Are there any disused tanks in the village ? Have any steps been taken to renovate them ?

(f) Number of pumpsets and irrigation wells :

(g) Do people hire out ploughs etc.?

(h) What are the usual hire charges ?

(i) Is there any mutual co-operation in agricultural practices ?

(j) Are chemical fertilisers used ?

(k) Is there any industrial establishment like flour mill, rice mill etc., in the village ?

**VI. Marriage :**

(a) At what age are marriages contracted ?

(b) Write a note on the marriage ceremonies ?

(c) Is polyandry or polygamy practised ?

(d) Is divorce granted ? If so, by whom and for what reasons ?

**VII. Religious Practices :**

(a) No. of temples/mosques/churches in the village :

(b) Do villagers ever join in common worship ?

(c) What are the main fairs and festivals celebrated ?

(d) How ancient is the festival ? Mention the local legend about the village and the fair or festival :

(e) Does this attract people from nearby villages ?

(f) Mention the name of the deity :

(g) What is the duration of the festival ?

(h) Is any shandy conducted during the festival either in the village itself or in the outskirts ?

(i) Are communal feasts or free kitchens organised during the festival ?

**VIII. Co-operation :**

(a) Is there a Co-operative Society? What is the nature? (Credit, Marketing etc.)

(b) Total share capital :

(c) Number of members :

(d) Total dues outstanding as on date :

(e) Is there scope for development of co-operative activities ?

**IX. Recreational facilities :**

(a) What are the recreational facilities available ?

(b) Do all villagers participate in these activities ?

(c) Is there any play ground in the village ? Mention area of playground :

(d) Is there any club for sports or recreation ? What sports are played and what amenities are provided in the club ?

**X. Livestock :**

(a) Total number of livestock in the village as per 1956 Livestock Census :

(b) Are there any improved breeds of cattle in the village ?

(c) Average milk yield—buffalo/cow :

(d) Which is the nearest Veterinary Hospital ?

(e) Is there a cattle pound in the village ?

(f) Is animal transport used ?

**XI. General :**

(a) Do villagers tattoo their bodies ?

(b) Do villagers favour female education ?

(c) Do the children get sufficient quantities of milk ?

(d) Number of street lights (kerosene or electric lamps to be specified) :

**XII.** Is any legend attached to the origin of the village ?

**XIII.** Are there any ancient monuments or places of architectural value in the place ? If so, describe them.

## APPENDIX III

### Glossary of Local Terms

| S.No. | Local terms | Phonetic transcription | English equivalents |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Arai-moodi | Aṟai-Mūḍi | A piece of silver usually leaf-shaped suspended by a waist cord, worn by little girls. |
| 2. | Attiyal | Aṭṭiyal | Circular neck-ornament |
| 3. | Dhatchina | Daṭchiṇa | Customary gift |
| 4. | Golusu | Kolusu | Anklet, usually made of silver |
| 5. | Inam | Ināṃ | Gift |
| 6. | Jadai | Jaḍai | Plaited hair |
| 7. | Jathagam | Jātagam | Horoscope |
| 8. | Kadukkan | Kaḍukkan | An ear-ornament worn by men |
| 9. | Kanji | Kañji | Gruel of rice or millet |
| 10. | Kappu | Kāppu | A bracelet |
| 11. | Karai | Kārai | A neck-ornament, usually made of gold or silver |
| 12. | Karumanthiram | Karumāṉdiram | An expiatory ceremony performed on the last day of the pollution after a death. |
| 13. | Kathuvali | Kāḍuvāḷi | A set of twelve ear-rings, worn by Muslim women |
| 14. | Kondai | Koṇḍai | Chignon |
| 15. | Koodam | Kūḍam | Hall |
| 16. | Kisthi | Kisti | Land tax to be paid by the landholders. |
| 17. | Koppu | Koppu | An ornament worn on the upper part of the ear by women. |
| 18. | Kozhu | Koḷu | Iron blade of the plough, plough-share |
| 19. | Kudumi | Kuḍumi | Tuft of hair |
| 20. | Kuladeivam | Kuladeyvam | Clan deity |
| 21. | Kuppayam | Kuppāyam | Bodice worn by Muslim women |
| 22. | Kurikaran | Kuṟikāran | Professional astrologer |
| 23. | Lolak | Lōlak | A suspending ear-ornament |
| 24. | Malai | Mālai | A garland |
| 25. | Manai | Maṇai | A plank made of wood |
| 26. | Manvetti | Maṇveṭṭi | Spade |
| 27. | Mattil | Māṭṭil | A small chain connecting the ear stud and hair |

| S.No. | Local terms | Phonetic transcription | English equivalents |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28. | Moi ... | Moy ... | Presentation of cash or gift to the bride or bridegroom |
| 29. | Mukkali ... | Mukkāli ... | A small wooden stool with three legs |
| 30. | Nanjai ... | Nañjey ... | Wet land |
| 31. | Nattanmaikaran. | Nāṭṭāṇmaikkāran ... | Leader of the caste |
| 32. | Onnappu Thattu. | Onnappu Taṭṭu ... | Middle ear-ring |
| 33. | Oorani ... | Ūraṇi ... | Tank used for bathing or drinking purposes |
| 34. | Padai ... | Pāḍai ... | Bier |
| 35. | Pallam ... | Paḷḷam ... | Pit, a low land |
| 36. | Pannaruval ... | Pannaṟuvāḷ ... | Reaping hook |
| 37. | Parai ... | Paṟai ... | Drum |
| 38. | Pathaneer ... | Padaṉīr ... | Palm juice |
| 39. | Pongal ... | Poṅgal ... | Harvest festival in mid-January |
| 40. | Poonool ... | Pūṉūl ... | Sacred thread worn by men of certain castes cross-wise over the left shoulder. |
| 41. | Pulungal arisi ... | Puḷuṅgal arisi ... | Rice parboiled with a little water |
| 42. | Punniahavachanam- | Puṇṇiyahavasanam ... | A purificatory ceremony |
| 43. | Ragukalam ... | Rāhu Kālam ... | The inauspicious part of the day under the influence of Ragu, the eighth planet. |
| 44. | Sangu ... | Saṅgu ... | A conch or shell |
| 45. | Sithadai ... | Siṟṟāḍai ... | A small saree of three to four yards worn by young girls. |
| 46. | Straddha ... | Strādda ... | Death anniversary |
| 47. | Surai ... | Sūṟai ... | A blight affecting growing paddy |
| 48. | Thali ... | Tāli ... | Marriage badge tied around the bride's neck. |
| 49. | Thandai ... | Taṇḍai ... | Anklet, usually made of silver |
| 50. | Thayathu ... | Tāyattu ... | A small cylindrical metal box containing an amulet |
| 51. | Thotti ... | Tōṭṭi ... | Scavenger |
| 52. | Thukkappadal... | Tukkappāḍal ... | Funeral hymns of Catholics |
| 53. | Uthiriyam ... | Uttiriyam ... | A religious badge worn by Catholics |
| 54. | Velanmai ... | Vēḷaṇmai ... | Cultivation of soil |

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